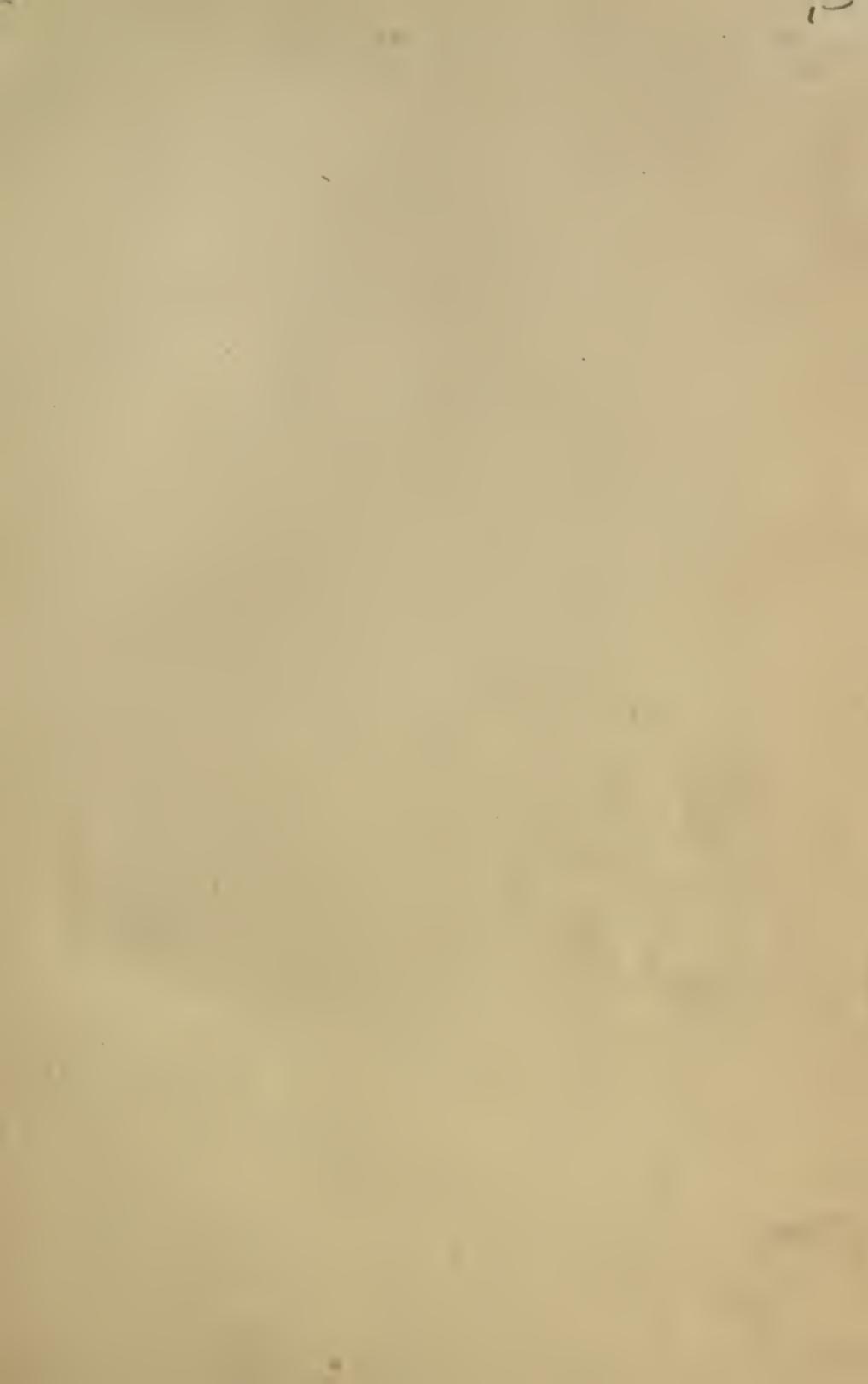


ONE  
WONDERFUL  
ROSE

BERTHA AND ARTHUR GRIFFITHS

12/-







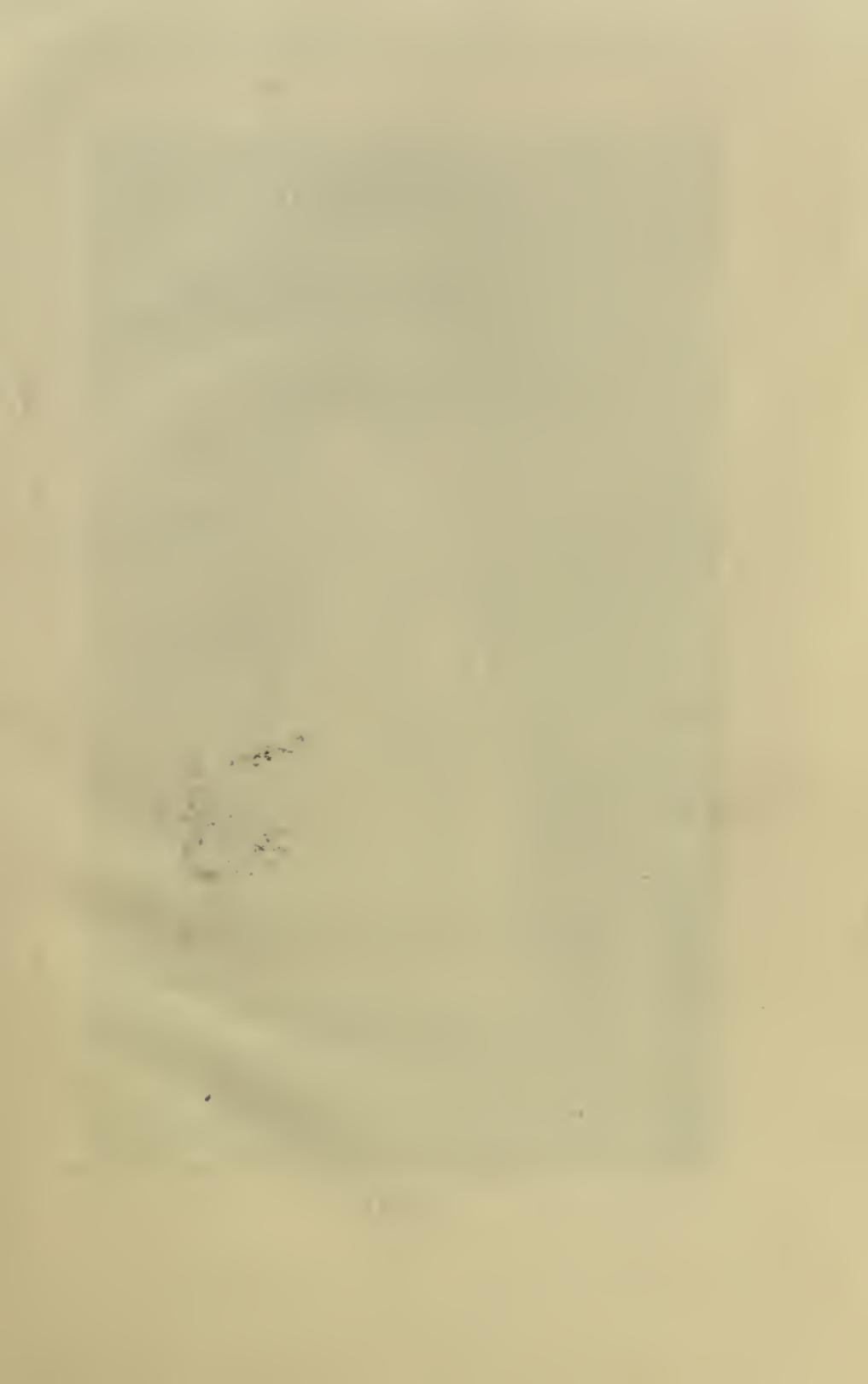
Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2007 with funding from  
Microsoft Corporation





# ONE WONDERFUL ROSE







DUNORA

# ONE WONDERFUL ROSE

BY

BERTHA & ARTHUR GRIFFITHS



BOSTON  
RICHARD G. BADGER  
THE GORHAM PRESS

COPYRIGHT, 1920, BY BERTHA J. GRIFFITHS

---

All Rights Reserved

Made in the United States of America

---

The Gorham Press, Boston, U. S. A.

TO HER  
THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED

TO HER  
WHOM FOR LONG YEARS I KNEW ONLY IN MY DREAMS

TO HER  
WHO BECAME THE LIGHT OF MY LIFE, WHO BANISHED DISCOURA-  
MENT, GAVE HOPE, BROUGHT BIRTH TO INSPIRATION, AND  
WHO GAVE THE FACTS, PLOT AND INCENTIVE FOR  
THIS NOVEL WHOSE UNTIRING ZEAL AND  
FAITHFUL HAND SUPERVISED AND  
CORRECTED THIS WORK

TO HER  
MY WIFE, BERTHA

2135970 '



## FOREWORD

“Many giants great and small  
Stalking through the land  
Would to earth be hurléd down  
If met by Daniel’s Band.

Dare to be a Daniel,  
Dare to stand alone,  
Dare to have a purpose firm,  
And dare to make it known.”

And that is the purpose of One Wonderful Rose, for this book is not written for the dilettante or the fondled scion of luxury’s contagion. A drop of ink makes millions think and a preacher in the pulpit is worth a dozen on vacation; therefore this absolutely true story of man’s inhumanity to man is told in all its naked truth. If you do not wish to know what has before this been hidden, if you do not wish to know what hellhounds men can be concerning an unprotected and innocent girl, if you do not wish to read the story of one of the noblest women who ever walked, if you do not wish to read the story of one of the truest loves that ever existed then do not read

## ONE WONDERFUL ROSE



## CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I CAUSED BY A VOICE . . . . .	13
II THE MORNING BREAKS . . . . .	27
III THE GREAT PILOT LEADS . . . . .	34
IV DUNORA . . . . .	41
V THE WAIT AND THE RE-MEETING . . . . .	48
VI IN THE BEGINNING . . . . .	55
VII THE WEE LASSIE . . . . .	63
VIII DUNORA'S GIRLHOOD HOME . . . . .	71
IX DUNORA FINDS TRUTH . . . . .	78
X THE CLOSE OF SCHOOL . . . . .	85
XI WHEN "BAD" IS "WORSE" . . . . .	94
XII THE GREAT AWAKENING . . . . .	103
XIII THE UNSEEN STORM . . . . .	111
XIV OUT INTO THE WORLD ALONE . . . . .	122
XV THE CRY OF A BROKEN HEART . . . . .	129
XVI HOPELESS DAYS AND A WEARY ROAD . . . . .	137
XVII THE HIGHLAND PASTURE . . . . .	144
XVIII THE GREAT PRESENCE . . . . .	151
XIX THE HOUSE OF SILENCE . . . . .	160
XX THE WEARY ROAD CONTINUED . . . . .	168
XXI TRIALS . . . . .	176
XXII HER FIRST HOME . . . . .	193
XXIII FAREWELL HELL . . . . .	206
XXIV GLORY ADVANCES . . . . .	215
XXV THE PROPOSAL . . . . .	223
XXVI HOME . . . . .	238
XXVII LOVE RULES . . . . .	250



# ONE WONDERFUL ROSE



# ONE WONDERFUL ROSE

## CHAPTER ONE

CAUSED BY A VOICE

**A** TURN in the road, a step to one side, a passing face, a sound of a voice may be the means of changing a life for time and eternity. The buying of a ticket, the stepping out of a car, the glance of an eye, the decision taken on the spur of a moment may lead to consequences which no measure can compute. Upon merest lift of a finger eternal destinies may be decided for we are surrounded by determining influences which will ripen into full fruit when destiny, or you may spell it with a capital letter, decides that the time has come for your life to be changed.

Let once a life be seeking truth, and that is merely another way of spelling light, and the opportunity will surely come that will lead to the fountainhead of truth and the source of light in a degree dependent upon the sincerity of the desire for truth. And it will be one of these trivial circumstances that will prove to be the fork of the roads that leads in the desired direction.

Vir Noble was restless. He was not so for a

## 14     *ONE WONDERFUL ROSE*

useless purpose though he thought his restlessness due merely to the summer season and the human longing for the great out doors.

His work in the city was at that stage where he could take a vacation without worriment from a business standpoint. But because he could take a vacation is not a sure indication that he would take one and he was not usually over-indulgent in the matter of allowing himself periods of relaxation. Being inclined to giving himself up to some degree of mental speculation, he occasionally lost himself in the mazes of thought. This was one of those occasions.

There are those who merely dream, who permit thought after thought to chase themselves idly through the brain in a kaleidoscope of variegated impulses, and who thereby derive pleasure, but they are obtaining pleasure from a vacuum, for dreaming is a vacuum of ideas. Vir Noble was not accustomed to dream, but his thinking was apt to be constructive or inquisitive. The why of events, the reasons for happenings, the purpose of conditions engaged his thought. He was therefore a seeker after light.

On this warm and unusually tranquil summer's day a spirit of revolt against human conditions held him. He had been reading in a news item a sordid account of a nature which stirred his manhood in detestation.

The whole account brought up in his mind a picture of man's inhumanity to man and how literally rotten to the core was the social system which permitted and really condoned the preying of the strong upon the weak, which enabled unscrupulous

persons, because of the inequality of the division of money, to take advantage of the need of others.

He expressed his thoughts in words. "Oh surely somewhere on this earth there must exist a character, self trained, naturally noble, which has survived the fires of a harassed life and through its own inborn strength emerged unscathed. Such a life would be worth a thousand lives which had been shielded from every evil wind that blows and such a life could be one truly called a human diamond."

He paused, put his head in his hands as his elbows rested on his desk. Remaining silent for a time, buried in thought he again spoke to himself, "It is not the life brought up amid the velvets that is worth while but the life which has stood four square to every wind that blows and emerged swept clean of dross and sham by the tempests which have beaten around it. The diamond in its unpolished state is but a lustreless stone but after the hard grinding of the lapidary's wheel it becomes a brilliant gem."

He turned from his reverie and took out his watch. The wonderful day of nature's smiling charms was drawing to a close. "I'll do it!" he exclaimed. The following moments revealed what he meant by his exclamation "I'll do it." He took from its resting place behind a heavy table his capacious travelling bag and, rather strange to relate, opened two of his desk drawers and drew therefrom sufficient clothes to prepare for somewhat of a journey. Vir, during the summer season, constantly kept a change of clothes in his office in case he should suddenly determine to take a journey.

In coming to the quick decision to which he came and in making the exclamation "I'll do it!" Vir Noble had come to a fork in the road of life and had made a decision which was to bear wonderful fruit. At the time that those momentous decisions come we very infrequently realize their importance.

With the hilarity of a boy in his teens Vir jumped up from his task of packing his leather bag and almost shouted "Hurrah! Off to the wilds of Maine! What a night for a steamer trip!"

Oh surely, very surely there is somewhere a Power which is very kind to people often who do not realize that Power as well as to those who do. In another spot not far away from where Vir Noble packed his travelling necessities was an individual whom the wanderlust had also seized at that time. Up to that hour that life had lived—ah, but let us refer to that later. It were better that this life unfold its richness in due season as the rose, lifted on high by its stem of thorns, unfolds to the worshipping sun a gorgeous array of petals of such consummate beauty "that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."

Down Broad Street of the metropolis of New England Vir Noble walked. At Foster's Wharf lay the steamer waiting to be unleashed and start northward on its journey to the rockbound coast of the pioneer State of the North.

'Neath the north star's chilly gleaming,  
Winter's frost and Summer's prime,  
Ever stands thy stately emblem,  
State of Maine, thy hardy pine.

On thy coasts, storm-bound and rocky,  
Roars the wild Atlantic's might,  
Dashing spray and hurtling sea spume  
Greet the pole star's frosty light.

O'er thy hills and through thy forests,  
In thy marts and on thy coasts,  
Walk "Dirigo's" north born manhood,  
State of Maine, thy proudest boast.

To Vir Noble the Pine Tree State strongly appealed. Almost invariably when the vacation or relaxation spirit called he went to the forests or rock bound coast of the American Lion of the North.

"A ticket for Bath, please," Vir requested of the purser as the boat was about to depart, "and a stateroom also." "I can only give you an inside room as the outside ones are all taken." "Very well," replied Vir, "I came late and, of course, at this season of the year I expected to find the boat crowded." He found his stateroom about amidships on the starboard side. Ah Fate, never ceasing leader of the lives of men, did you direct such a small detail as even the location of that stateroom—and one other?

Noble made many acquaintances, but admitted only a few within the charmed circle of his inner thoughts. In a crowd of the nature of that on the steamer that beautiful evening he was accustomed to roam around observing but not necessarily being observed for he was not ostentatious. His was a singularly lonely existence, for he was yet to find the one who could share his real life. In a crowd he

always felt more lonely than when actually alone, for the crowd but emphasized his need of a real mate.

Vir Noble, do you know whom that other one is whom the restless spirit seized at the same time that it seized you? Do you know that Fate, too, led that one so that your paths should meet and that that beautiful night marked by the soft kiss of Summer's balmy zephyr when Old Ocean was lulled to sleep by the plush gloved hand of a mid-summer celestial benediction should be the time of your meeting? One of the great kindnesses of Providence is its habit of thrusting its pleasures upon the recipients without previous warning. Then they come as a divine blessing the realization of which brings more real pleasure than the uninitiated can possibly imagine. And to Vir Noble was to come that night a sight which would be the gleam and then the fullness of light for which his longing heart yearned. Oh! if his restless, longing heart had only at that moment known what joy was in store for it, what realization of hopes long deferred, what reward for long waiting.

Tired of watching the people whom he saw he went to his favorite place on a steamer, the extreme bow. There he stood as the ocean conveyance ploughed down the channel where Governor's Island slipped by on the port and Nix's Mate on the starboard, and then, in the yet gleaming day, the upright beacons of Boston Light and Minot's Ledge, Cohassetward, showed themselves. Off to the port sat ancient Marblehead nestled on the rocks over its landlocked harbor entrance and ahead rose the

white pillar of Eastern Point light at Gloucester's harbor entrance on Mother Ann. The whole scene was surcharged with poetic and romantic influence. Hardly a scene could have been chosen more fitting for the beginning of a mighty romance. O'er Marblehead brooded the spirit of "Massachusetts to Virginia," "Skipper Ireson's Ride"; behind lay the Athens of America, called not a city but "a state of mind." Towering into the sky rose the shaft of Bunker Hill where Webster delivered his memorable oration and almost under the monument's shadow lay Concord and Lexington.

Vir arose. The spell of the ocean was upon him and, possibly, an unseen influence soon to be revealed. He mounted the steps to the upper deck where the canopy of the heavens was over him. He walked toward the bow and—a voice melted into him and he stopped instantly. His heart went to that voice as a child leaps to its mother. That voice, that glance, were his making, yet he did not then know it, but what he did know was that there before him stood one who instantly put all thought of other subjects or other persons from his mind and who at once occupied his entire thought. And, joy of joys, the girl looked up and met his gaze fully and frankly. Vir Noble simply palpitated all over as those wonderful eyes rested full on his, with the most utter frankness he had ever witnessed in human being. Oh how those eyes spoke, every good and noble impulse was written in them, the possibility of a mighty love was evident therein. They were big, wide orb'd blue eyes with never a suggestion of deceit or duplicity in them, with a great in-

born innocence speaking from them which gripped Vir's heart with a feelable gripping.

All this Vir saw in a glance which transfixed his gaze. The face was the most utterly appealing he had ever seen and she herself was undoubtedly entirely unconscious of the fact. The habitual expression was extremely remarkable, remarkable for many reasons of great worth. The whole effect of the face was of extraordinary beauty. Plain physical beauty is quite common in a woman of refinement but the beauty of this girl possessed qualities much in excess of physical beauty.

Perfect beauty of feature was the physical foundation upon which her more than handsome face was created, but the beauty that rested on that foundation was largely of her own making and to her was the credit for it.

A frown on that countenance was surely a foreigner and should have been a total stranger. In the presence of that face no true man could plan anything but joy for its possessor, but the presence of the lurking pathos in those glorious orbs revealed the fact that much that was painful to her had transpired.

And it was this almost hidden pathetic expression, this marvellous depicted beauty of character, the generous mobile lips, the width between the eyes, the gently waving hair of ardent brown, the total beauty of the face that appealed mightily to Vir Noble and told him that here stood a woman who had fought an heroic fight and had won.

If Vir Noble had been a man of more effrontery than he was he would have immediately walked to the woman and spoken to her. He concluded to

bide a little time and see what would happen. The girl sat down on a convenient steamer chair. Vir noticed that she carried in her hand a silver mesh purse. She placed it in her lap as she sat and, in an involuntary moment, it slipped from her and fell to the deck. Vir stepped up, stooped and lifted the purse from the deck and placed it in her outstretched hand. Her sweet, latently imploring eyes had followed his movements and as he placed the purse in her hand she for the first time spoke directly to him. And the words were, "I thank you." The words thrilled the man and he wished she would not stop speaking.

"You are surely welcome," said he. Then he noticed the silver chain attached to the purse was broken. "May I not fix it for you?" he asked. "Oh, I can do that myself, I thank you;" and she placed the two expanded links of the silver chain between her teeth preparatory to biting them together. Before his eyes flashed a gleam of pearly whiteness which he had never seen in mouth before. "No, no!" he exclaimed. "You might hurt those splendid teeth!" and he took the purse, interlocked the expanded links and pressed the open ends together. They were better acquainted than if a thousand persons had introduced them.

He drew up a steamer chair. "May I sit beside you and talk? I am alone and rather lonely." "You may, I, too, am alone," she replied. They sat there a time in silence and together gazed out over the Summer sea which had not enough motion to perceptibly move the boat from an even keel. At length he broke the silence. "If I am not too inquisitive may I ask where you are going?" "You

may," she replied, "and I will answer. I felt the need of a change and am going to Gardiner." "May I ask your name?" he interrogated. "If I may ask yours," she said laughing. "You may," he assented. "My name is Dunora Whitney." He repeated, "Dunora Whitney, the person who named you liked pretty names." "Now what is your name?" asked Dunora. "I am called Vir Noble." "I can return the compliment, your name is strong where mine is pretty," laughed the girl. Vir's answer came in verse:

"Dunora's a name that is pretty,  
And Vir is a name that is strong,  
And she is a girl who is witty,  
While he is a man who is long."

The girl looked at him more fully. "I am always fond of seeing people fond of poetry." Vir kept silent for just a moment and then said, "Yes I am very fond of poetry. It seems to me that poetry is the music of literature and literature is the written music of the soul, so if a person is fond of poetry it signifies that they have in themselves the highest kind of soul music."

The girl was looking off to sea as he was speaking. She heard all his words and was drinking in their meaning and therefore was wrapped in thought.

She turned and looked at him. "I want to ask you something. You have just said that fondness for poetry indicates a person who has music of soul. Do you think my speaking to you, a stranger, without the formality of an introduction was out of

place or out of keeping with the quality of soul you mention?"

Vir responded with interest. "If I hold myself in respect, isn't it a fitting question for me to ask myself as well as for you to ask yourself? Would I have entered into conversation with you for any length of time, even if we had been duly introduced, unless I found you a spirit to which I needed no introduction?"

This answer showed the girl the respect Vir held himself in and so knew he must hold a person of her sex in even higher respect. "That remark helps me," said the girl with a half discernible sigh of relief.

A quiet fell over them. Their spirits were becoming better acquainted. The beauty of their surroundings was reflected in their inner thoughts. The radiant glow of the setting sun, the balminess and plushlike touch of the light moving sea breeze, the blinking eyes of the lighthouses beginning to glimmer, all lent their influence to the scene.

They were seated amidships on the port side away from the groups of other passengers. He wondered what the girl was doing in travelling alone and as he was entertaining the thought she, almost as though she read his thoughts, said, "You no doubt wonder why I am alone. I am going to a relative's, and I have gone this way before when I have wanted to get away from my surroundings. I am apt to rely on myself." Vir interposed, "One often wishes to be alone. Let us take a little walk up forward." Dunora arose and together they walked forward toward the front of the pilot house.

A light shone from an open door amidships. As they approached Dunora looked through the opening and spoke to the wireless operator. "Good evening, Mr. Belverdy; I see you have come on duty." "Yes, Miss Whitney." The girl turned toward the wireless instruments and entered. Vir followed. They sat down on the chairs given them by the operator and Dunora introduced the two men. It so happened that Noble was acquainted with the mysteries of wireless operation to a degree unusual to most people, for he had been actively engaged as manager for a large telegraph organization. He had studied into the secrets of its operation and the two men vied with each other explaining the apparatus and its operation to Dunora. "Listen!" said the operator, as he was straining to catch flashes of the electrical impulses travelling through the ether. Dunora put the receivers to her ears and could discern the sharp dashes and dots of the Morse code coming from some unknown source. "That is a message coming from one of two British warships off to the east looking for enemy ships. They are talking in code," said Belverdy. "Soon you will hear the other vessel answer." True enough it was not long ere the answering message came. The great world war was under way and the British men-o'-war were scouring Old Ocean to brush off the commerce of its enemy. What a God given wonder with which to flash human thoughts through space itself!

The evening was so balmy that its inviting peace enticed them from the glare of the electric light in the cabin to continue their walk forward toward the bow. As they stepped from the cabin for just

a moment his awkwardness caused her body to lean against his. He felt his senses surge. Who was this fair woman who among the world's thousands whom he had seen should so instantly attract him and the touch of whose body should thrill him as he had never been thrilled before? As they walked toward the bow Dunora remarked, "When I was on this boat on a former trip one of the ship's officers whom I knew kindly introduced me to the wireless operator as I was anxious to learn about the wireless apparatus."

Off toward the rocky shore of Mother Ann stared the two winkless eyes of the dual Thatcher's Island lights which seem to look benignantly forth warning vessels from the rocky coast and telling mariners that no matter how wild the waves there was a shore built upon a rock which neither storm nor stress could disturb. And how longingly many a storm tossed sailor has looked for Thatcher's lights as his ship came in from the mighty ocean.

As they stood before the pilot house Dunora said, "Thatcher's Island is usually my good night light, for I am accustomed to retire at this point when I come to Maine and I will say good night to you here. I have been so used to being alone that I have a habit of going to an unfrequented portion of the steamer to be mistress of my own thoughts before retiring."

They clasped hands. "May I see you again in the morning?" asked the man. "You will have to rise early if you do," laughed the girl, "for we enter the Kennebec before daylight and I usually rise early to see the beauties of the river." "I have to get up early for we reach Bath at about four in

the morning." Vir went toward the main cabin off of which his stateroom was situated. In his little cabin he found himself wrapped in thought of Dunora.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE MORNING BREAKS

WEEPING endureth for the night but joy cometh in the morning," says the Good Book; and many and many an earthly tear has been dried by the thought of the joy which cometh as surely as the morning dawns even though the weeping endureth through the earthly night and the world's weeping, to which the Bible refers, endures during the night of sin in which we live. Ah, were it not so what a world this would be!

These thoughts comforted Vir as he tossed sleepless on his berth that night, for his brain simply refused to rest and kept repeating the scenes of the talk with the girl and ringing into his mental hearing the oft repeated word "Dunora!"

It hurt his pride for he had thought himself master of himself and the thought that a woman could occupy his mental vision even for that time was an unknown experience for him. He turned from one side of his narrow quarters to the other and with each turn to a more comfortable position, he sought to rest only to have that face constantly before him and to hear that name "Dunora!"

"Oh, she's only a girl!" he at last muttered in disgust with himself. And then a strange thing happened. An almost audible voice spoke within

him which said "You Lie! She isn't only a girl. She is more of a true woman than you have ever known and you know it. Don't be a coward. Are you afraid of a woman?"

He rolled over again and sighed. "You are right," he spoke in answer to the voice he had certainly heard within him. "Vir Noble, you are in for a sleepless night and a woman has caused it, but you must charge it up to homage to a real queen."

Oh, how long the mental weeping of that night until the morning would break and the joy would come in the presence of Dunora once more. Ah, but there was a tinge of pain in it, for he knew he must leave the boat at Bath, while she was to sail further up the Kennebec.

In that summer time the dawn came early, so early that he didn't think the girl would arise so soon, but as he was awake there was no need of remaining indoors, so he went outside in the grey of the dawn. As he went from his door he looked at the door of her stateroom which was across the hallway from his and slightly nearer the bow. How much even a wooden door may shelter.

Strange feeling to himself, he felt ill at ease and like a lost person. He wandered about the boat looking in every nook for the object of his thoughts, longing to behold her with a longing he could hardly understand since he had seen so little of her. But then there came to him again the thought he had experienced when he first saw her.

And then there came to him the maddening thought, "How have I impressed her? I cannot hope she has thought of me as I have thought of her,

for she is a woman and naturally recedes from a man and where I saw almost at once in her what I have long been unconsciously seeking, she may have seen very little in me to attract her."

As Vir walked on the deck where he had seen her the night before he again caught a glimpse of Dunora coming up the companionway. She looked directly in his direction and he was pleased to see a smile illumine her features. As her form emerged from the hatchway the sun, though only on the eastern horizon and hidden by the hills of Georgetown Island, bathed the air with a benison of gold and a special crown seemed to halo the head of Dunora. In fact at all times an intangible and peculiar radiance seemed to be around her, a radiance which rendered her apart from the throng.

As she came onto the upper deck he went toward her. "You see I did get up as early as you, Miss Whitney," he laughed. "I didn't think you would," said she. "There may have been a reason," he added. "What was it?" she queried. "I wanted to be sure I didn't miss you." Dunora only laughed.

Off to the port a reef stood out of the river at low tide and many seals were resting on the rocks. Although quite light the searchlight was thrown on them. It kept their attention so fixed that they did not plunge into the river as the great steamer passed. The novel sight much interested the girl and she clapped her hands in glee. It seemed very good to Vir to see that this girl liked the same things that he did. Both were lovers of poetry and nature.

As the moments passed they sat much in silence. Even at that short acquaintance there was, at least

on the man's part, a feeling of rest, of almost unconscious relaxation from care. Yes, Vir was drawn to this woman for many reasons. He having a nature of depth and having passed through periods of peculiar suffering, longed for a true companion.

"So you are going up the river," he said. "Yes." "And I get off at Bath." She did not answer. "Where did you say you were going?" he asked in an unconsciously almost rude attempt to enliven the conversation. "I am going to Gardiner to a relative's for a rest." He hardly knew what to say then unless he said what he wanted to, but didn't dare to say. He thought he would try to get an opening, so said, "I am sorry I am going to get off at Bath." In the most innocent fashion, not in the least indicating that she had any idea why he was sorry for getting off at Bath, she said, "I think Bath a very pretty city, why are you sorry?" He jumped at the chance offered. "Because I would exceedingly like to continue on to your journey's end for the sake of your company."

Fiddler's Reach, where the Kennebec turns at right angles in its course, was reached and Vir knew that beyond the western turn Bath would come into view. There he would leave her on that day but he was burning with the resolve that he would go through more to see her again than he would have gone through to have seen any other girl he ever knew. But would she give him her address. He trembled as he asked her. "Miss Whitney, I am going to make an unusual request. I wish to call on you and renew this acquaintance. Will you please give me your address?"

The pause seemed hours before she spoke. "If

you will give me a piece of paper I will write it down." The paper was quickly produced and the address written down. Here Dunora showed one face of her prismatic character; whatever she determined to do she did without thought of shame or convention.

"I thank you very much for trusting me with your address. When do you return home to Massachusetts?" "In about a week I think." Vir Noble thereupon resolved to go to Massachusetts also at that time.

Vir clasped the hand of Dunora as the steamer tied up at the wharf at Bath and said, "I shall see you again soon, I trust." As he stood on the wharf Dunora stood above on the deck where they had conversed on the previous evening. As the boat drew from the wharf and majestically turned up stream she waved her hand at him and he went to the inter-island steamer which was to carry him to his destination. That too steamed from her dock and turned into the Kennebec. Vir stood in the stern looking toward the steamer carrying Dunora away from him.

The trip of leisure which Vir had planned in Boston turned out to be a trip of thought. Everywhere he went the face of Dunora was seen and her name frequently came to him unawares. Then he tried to fight against it, but, strong as he was, he found it of no use. If it had been a business trip on which he was he would hardly have made much of a success of it. Constantly he wondered just where Dunora was at that moment, just what she was doing, and whom she was with and—if she thought of him.

## 32     *ONE WONDERFUL ROSE*

The wooded hills and rocky sea cliffs which usually filled him with beauty gendered pleasure then displeased him for he said, "They rise between Dunora and me." His vacation was anything but rest. It was a constant longing to see the girl.

The week came to an end and he followed Dunora in his mind on her journey back to Massachusetts. Secure in the possession of her address he still lingered in Maine trying to conquer his ardent desire. But he finally admitted that he would find no peace till he found her, so he turned his course toward Massachusetts also.

He could not force himself, unless with an extreme effort, to return to Boston by steamer, for the very boat which brought Dunora and him from Boston was the one which went from Bath to Boston that night. Had he returned on that boat he would have passed another sleepless night and every nook and corner where Dunora had been seen by him would have spoken of her with a thousand clamorous tongues.

But Dunora! The girl who had so remarkably wrapped herself into the very tissue of Vir's brain, what of her?

As the larger steamer had swung up the broad Kennebec she had gone to her stateroom to rest from the momentary fatigue of arising so early and then went to the bow where she enjoyed the scenery and was joined by another acquaintance, and in the conversation all thought of the previous evening was thrust from her mind. Little did she realize the impression she had made on Vir.

Dunora had been met by no one when she landed at Gardiner, for in her restlessness she had gone on

the impulse of the moment and had notified no one of her coming. In fact, so sudden had been her determination to go to Maine that she had been witnessing a performance at a theatre the afternoon previous, and while seated there had made up her mind to take the trip. A relative lived on the hills back of the city, and to her home she went as soon as she arrived.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE GREAT PILOT LEADS

THESE days at Gardiner were days in which Dunora raced as a thing of the woods. The freedom of the open air, the strength of the hills, the breadth and depth of the woods drew her irresistibly and sweetly. She acted as one endeavoring to forget and annul the past and other surroundings. There was almost always an appearance of a depth to her that seemed to be unfathomable. That was a large part of what drew Vir to the girl with the longing of a tender heart to know the suffering that had been in another tender heart.

Vir returned to Boston by train after wandering about near the scene where he had left her instead of remaining in one place as he intended. Every day had its protracted thoughts of Dunora, and he planned the return to her with great joy. The arrival in Boston filled him with a feeling he had never felt before. His old office, his old haunts were seen by him in a new light and, at the earliest opportunity, he went to the address she had given him.

It was with a feeling of anticipation, of a combination of reluctance coupled with consummate joy that he wended his way toward the house where he expected to see the girl of his thoughts. His hesitation was caused by a reluctance to see her in any

other than those ideal surroundings in which he had met the woman who already was a magnet to him. Something in those dear childlike eyes of hers told him that she was a true queen fit for the highest honors, the loftiest home comforts.

Vir enquired his way and at length looked up at a signboard and read the name she had given him as the street on which she lived. He looked up and down its length and scrutinized every house. Could it be that really he was looking at the very street of all the streets on earth, where the girl of girls lived. And he stood on the corner and again his sentimental nature came into play and he clothed that street with the vestments of his fancy's conjuring.

And as he stood there a thousand thoughts threw their tranquil and tempestuous throes upon his brain. Who was Dunora Whitney? He could not answer that for he had not asked her. What was Dunora Whitney? That question he knew he would not have to ask anyone, for he felt assured his own manhood would find the answer in reading Dunora's true womanhood. One thing he knew of her and that he could never forget and that was she was all a woman should be.

Another of the multitudinous questions which came to him was why the pained look he had observed in her face, and still another, what was the foundation upon which she had built her very evident nobility? After he had stood there dreaming he slowly and deliberately walked up the street until—he stood before the house numbered with the number Dunora had given him. It was an apartment house. At last he was to see her! He mounted

the steps with a feeling akin to a whirligig's poise. He glanced at the names on the bell plates. Her name was not there!

In a quandary as to what to do he rang the bell to the lower apartment. There was a noise within as of some one stirring, and Vir's heart beat a little faster because of the sound. Presently the door opened and a woman stood before him. For one of the very few times in his life Vir's tongue grew stubborn and refused to do his bidding. At last he stammered "Is Dunora Whitney in?" He would not insult Dunora by asking if she lived there, even though her name did not appear among the residents therein. She had told him she lived here, so she must.

But the answer to Vir's question came from the lips of the woman. "Dunora Whitney did live here but she has moved away." There was a pause during which Vir trembled in fear to ask the next question. But it came. "Where is she now?" The woman looked at Vir rather searchingly before she spoke again. In that moment he felt that she was hesitating whether to tell or not to tell. Thank God she told!

He thanked the woman and then went to the new address which was not far away. There at last was the bell to ring. He pushed the button and it echoed through the apartment. All at once he heard a step on the stairs which he recognized.

The door opened and Dunora again stood before him. A look of surprise came to her. A feeling of joy came to him. "Oh, I didn't expect to see you here," she exclaimed. "How did you find out where I lived?" "The lady where you formerly

lived, the one downstairs told me.” It was an awkward moment, she did not ask him in, Vir was perplexed.

“Will you not come out with me a little while either to-day or to-morrow?” he asked her. Dunora thought a moment and replied, “I will meet you in the waiting room of the North Station at two o’clock to-morrow.” With a joyous “Thank you,” Vir departed and went to his rooms.

As the hours finally dragged their minutes out Vir went to the appointed place, swung one of the doors and walked into the waiting room. He glanced at the appointed spot and there she was. And again he was glad that his estimate of her had been correct.

As he approached she saw him and smiled a welcome as she stood. Together they walked the streets and talked and during the afternoon he learned nothing more about her than that she was keeping house for a man of much maturer years. She made no explanations and he asked no questions. Her dignity would not allow questioning. Yet in their conversation he learned a little of her youthful associates. Over it all was a shroud of mystery. Greater and greater grew the intense desire to get beneath the surface of this girl who was beginning to become wonderful to him.

After that meeting in Massachusetts they made an appointment for another meeting at the same place, but when Vir came she was not there. He was amazed. He waited and waited but she did not come. When one is beginning to become interested in or in the least attached to another person and they in any way fail them a wound is made. Vir

felt keenly the absence of this girl. There were the hurrying throngs but no Dunora. Oh, why didn't she come? In later years Vir found out why Dunora did not keep that appointment. The reason was not flattering to Vir.

Dunora had not asked him in, she had not asked him to call, he could not force himself on her, so did not find out then why she did not come. He was also unconsciously to himself then beginning to throw up his defences against allowing himself to become enamoured of a woman, for he knew what it would mean to him if he did. But his defences were of no avail, for it was to be. He felt as though they would meet again even if they did not seek a meeting.

Subsequent events proved two facts. They were, first, that Dunora Whitney had passed through experiences of the most trying kind for a girl on earth, that she had emerged from the fires of persecution and temptation absolutely white, unspotted and unscathed; and, secondly, that Vir Noble had gone through those similarly dissimilar events which fitted him for an appreciation of Dunora. Suffice it to say of him that from years of understanding he had sought to place his faculties on the altar of human service. His ability lay primarily in reading character and wielding the pen. Such should consider their dower sent only for the highest use.

“I hold it a duty of one who is gifted  
And royally dowered in all men’s sight  
To know no rest till his life is lifted  
Wholly up to his great gift’s height.

He must mould the man into rare completeness,  
For gems are set only in gold refined;  
He must fashion his thoughts into perfect  
sweetness  
And cast out folly and pride from his mind.

For he who drinks from a god's gold chalice  
Of art or music or rhythmic song  
Must sift from his soul the chaff of malice  
And weed from his heart the roots of wrong.

Great gifts should be worn like a crown be-  
fitting,  
And not like gems on a beggar's hands,  
And the toil must be constant and unremitting  
Which lifts up the king to the crown's demand."

And, though no meeting was arranged and the world is mighty and cities great, meet they did. But in the meantime Vir thought and thought of Dunora and began to long to see her, when one day as he was walking along a street of Lynn he saw her looking into a window. The same look of unhappiness was on that sweet face, and it made Vir long to have that little, childlike, innocent face lay on his broad breast and unburden that heart. She was turned away from Vir, so she did not see him until he spoke. "Oh, I'm so glad to see you again," exclaimed Vir. "Where are you living now?" Dunora told him she was living in a nearby town. "Can't we plan an outing some day this week?" he asked. "Yes, if you'll write me." He told her he would and would mention the place of meeting. She seemed somewhat preoccupied. He asked her if she had been much in

that locality and she paused ere she replied. A cloud passed over her face.

"Oh yes, I have been here in the past," she asserted and she hesitated as if in reverie. Never had Vir seen a face which more plainly told him that he must first pay a long apprenticeship to win her confidence and trust before he could ever get her secret. He knew he wanted to pay the price of apprenticeship. He felt her young life had been battered by the storms of human bestiality—there was a glory to her which told him that she had won in the fight.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DUNORA

**F**AR up North on Maine's green  
stream braes,  
In the days not long ago,  
There was born a wee bit lassie,  
In that land of drifted snow,  
And the May wind softly blessed her  
As she came from heaven down  
And the Lord of Hosts spoke to her,  
"Lass, I place on thee a crown."

"Blessed is he that overcometh,"  
On the sacred page is read,  
For the crown of life He giveth,  
That shall ransom from the dead.  
And the Lord of Life then trained her  
In the rough way of the cross,  
For He knew that early pleasures  
Meant indeed the crown's sure loss.

Then when still a toddling bairnie,  
Mother died and father went,  
And with cruel foster parents  
Loveless, toil-worn years were spent.  
And the little heart cried "Love me,"  
And the big wide eyes grew blurred,  
As, instead of love, harsh scoldings,  
Blames and heartless words were heard.

Oh, those long nights in the attic—  
Oh, that woodbox piled so high—  
Oh, the cow brought home from pasture—  
Oh, the weary feet,—the cry,  
When alone she bore her sorrow,  
When alone she wanted love,  
When she did not know the morrow  
Comes from God who is above.

Yes, the morrow sure was coming,  
For the One who dwelt on high  
Surely saw His chosen lassie,  
Surely heard her wee lips cry,  
And amid the storm's wild beating  
Making her a queen indeed,  
Mercifully, kindly, truly,  
God Himself supplied her need.

But the mills of God grind slowly  
And the guerdon yet to be  
Shone but in the distant future,  
Still there was the wild shore's lea,  
Where the breakers whelmed her over,  
Where the cold surge grasped her form,  
Where the whirlpool and the maelstrom  
Were the hirelings of the storm.

Wonder child marked by her nature,  
Strange and wild the neighbors said,  
But they did not know the yearnings  
Thrashed out, sobbed out on her bed.  
All alone she lived her wee life;  
All alone she thought her thoughts;  
Slowly, surely, it was coming  
“Lo, the woman God has wrought!”

For the diamond's brilliant lustre  
Is by cruel crushings made,  
And our golden glow of nature  
Comes to us when sorrow weighed  
Heavy, weighty, stern and fearsome,  
Till the weaker tissues fled  
And the residue was jewel,  
Brilliant, scintillating, red.

E'en the Saviour from the heavens,  
When He walked on earth below,  
Trod the Via Dolorosa,  
There His Father's love to know.  
And when all the thorny pathway  
Had been passed, the cross o'ercome,  
Then the Heavenly Father raised Him,  
Gave Him place in God's own throne.

So Dunora in her trials,  
Thorny road and cruel rod,  
Came, unknowing, blind, unseeing,  
Near and nearer to her God.  
Nearer, nearer Heavenly Father,  
Nearer still my God to thee,  
Even though it be the bitter  
Pang wracked cross that raiseth me.

“There's a wideness in God's mercy  
Like the wideness of the sea.”  
There's a sweetness in His leading,  
Which is more than sweet can be.  
There's a joy in His correction,  
Joy to know that you are led,  
There's a fullness of fruition,  
When by heavenly manna fed.

'Twas the Saviour's words of blessing,  
"Many are called, few chosen be"  
To the highest rank in heaven  
In God's throne eternally.  
Hard the road to earn the saintship,  
Strait the way and small the gate,  
Many called shall hear in anguish  
"Do not enter here!—Too late!"

Yet of all that lived below here  
The many called are few indeed,  
And the ones the Lord thus blesses  
Must indeed the child's heart need.  
"Except ye be as little children"  
Pure in heart with faith intent  
Ye can nowise to God's Kingdom,  
Ever have your spirits sent.

So the God of earth and heaven  
Looking o'er the hosts of men  
Found Dunora, helpless, childlike,  
Knew her spirit, saw her when  
Lone and hungry, cold and loveless,  
Tempted by the devil's snare  
Staunchly, fearlessly and queenly  
Hunger, cold, oppression bare.

At the early age of fifteen  
Robbed of childhood, crushed by work,  
Sold into a loveless marriage,  
Mockery which true men shirk.  
Thus her loveless foster parents  
Treat the unprotected child  
Thus their "Christian" hearts direct them  
Into madness, selfish, wild.

Of the sins the Good Book mentions  
None so vile and none so cold  
As the narrow lust and greed which  
Sells another's soul for gold.  
And the so-called man who "made" them  
"Man and wife" lied in his heart.  
God be praised, you cannot mock Him  
The lass has now another start.

For but misery and hunger  
Lovelessness and yearnings wild  
Racked the brain and wrenched the heart of  
That poor, innocent and God loved child.  
God be thanked, the blood of heroes  
Through her tender veinlets ran  
And alone, goldless and hungry  
Out into the world she ran.

Yes, it pains my heart to tell it,  
Oh I cannot tell how much,  
Penniless and hungry, friendless,  
Not a kindly hand to touch;  
Out into Satan's realm she wandered,  
Lustful eyes upon her preyed  
But the spirit of her Maker  
Gave her strength, her courage stayed.

Stayed her when weak from hunger  
Staggered she along the road  
When in every darksome corner  
Human curs on her would load  
Every food her body needed,  
Every earthly need supply,  
If she'd grovel in their vomit  
And amid their filth would lie.

Then to further crush the dross off,  
Then to raise more by the cross  
Suffered she the direst hunger,  
Saw her home's, her money's loss.  
Then bereft of all life's comforts  
Cold and homeless forth she went  
Like a heroine of fiction,  
Courage stopped the aching vent.

So the black days dragged their length out,  
So the bitter morning's rose,  
Roomed she in the barest bedrooms  
Clad in greatly mended clothes.  
Trusted oft with sums of money  
When for days she had not fed  
Safely brought it to its owner  
Hungry, famished, went to bed.

Rooming with girls far below her  
Hearing oft their heartless talk,  
She refrained from being of them  
All alone her path did walk.  
Then she did not know the reason  
Then her native spirit led,  
Then she did not know that God planned  
To arouse her from the dead.

Then the darkest hour descended,  
Seeming friends to devils turned;  
All around was blackest darkness,  
Deep despair within her burned.  
But the darkest hour descendeth  
Just before the morning's birth  
And her God just then was planning  
Greatest boon that comes to earth.

So, as His own jewels can be  
Only polished by His hand,  
So Dunora felt the friction  
Needful to her soul's demand.  
And when He had finished with her,  
Far the trials and scourgings ran  
Then He brought her forth resplendent,  
Gave her, head crowned, to a man.

To a man—yes to the one who  
Was to know her spirit's flower,  
To the one for whom the Father  
Had prepared her to that hour.  
And when first his eyes lit on her  
Instantly he was aware  
That a miracle of women  
Stood before him wondrous fair.

And the soul within him leaped forth  
To its mate, though he knew not  
That the girl of girls then stood there  
Led by God unto that spot.  
Yet there stirred within his heart's core  
Impulses not felt before,  
And the strangest heartfelt yearnings  
Made him long to know her more.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE WAIT AND THE RE-MEETING

VIR gloried in the thought that he was so soon to meet her again. He sat down and wrote the letter and went to look for her address and for the first time remembered in his excitement of seeing her again he had forgotten to ask for the address to which to send the letter. Here was the worst situation yet.

Forlorn were the days of waiting. Oh how could he see her! Where was she? The only way that he could look at it was that they would meet somehow, somewhere, soon. Dunora was constantly in Vir's mind. Where in the hurrying crowds was she?

Vir earnestly and fervently prayed that God would care for her and restore her to him at the earliest fitting opportunity. It became his custom to glance to right and left as he walked the streets, and, when business permitted, he went into the streets of the city where he had last met her hoping she might be on the streets.

The time dragged by. Through Boston's streets his way led him day after day and no sign of Dunora. Yet he did not despair. One bright day he hurried up Sudbury Street to Scollay Square and walked up the north side of the street. Passing

Cobb's Coffee House he turned to go up Tremont Street and was crossing the Square when—Dunora! A crowd was passing at the time and he did not see her until she was at his shoulder and it was only out of the corner of his eye that he saw her then. She had not seen him and passed into Cobb's to refresh herself with a coffee drink. He followed, bought a ticket for a cup of coffee, walked up to her and spoke. She turned and looked at him.

Again they had been led together, and a silent prayer of thanks went up to the Great White Throne whence all blessings flow. Neither spoke of their last meeting. From Dunora's words he could not tell what her feelings were. His joy at the meeting sufficiently recompensed him for what had gone before. "Will you come to dinner with me to-morrow evening?" "Yes."

Joy! Joy! Joy! He left that place of meeting with joy clothing his feet. Lonely in the extreme had been his life in the interim between his meeting with Dunora before and at this time. He had lonely rooms in a lonely part of the city, and nothing savored of the homelike. His thoughts had been in keeping with his surroundings. He then resolved that all his energies should be exercised in holding on to this girl.

As he went to his rooms that evening the old walls appeared clothed with a new shade of color which removed their sombreness. He had again met Dunora and she was to take dinner with him on the following day. He slept restlessly that night and awoke anxious for the evening, and the day's work dragged.

For the sake of his romantic nature he had ap-

pointed a place of meeting out of doors. To his intense delight when he approached the spot he saw Dunora approaching also.

Vir took the girl to a fine up to date restaurant on Tremont Street after finding out she had never eaten there before. The place was beautiful with its shining cut glass, white table linen, its waitresses dressed neatly also in pure white. The food was excellent, served as only people trained to that work know how to serve food. Everything was lovely but—Vir's table manners. Dunora sat there thinking, how can a man so learned, so used to meeting people have such table manners—when—

"Are you going to be at leisure to-morrow afternoon?" came from Vir's lips. Dunora looked up nervously and answered, "I shall be at leisure." Little did Vir know what her thoughts had been when he asked his next question, "I should feel very much favored if you will take dinner with me again to-morrow, I am rather lonely and it would be an extreme pleasure. Will you?" If he had not said he was lonely it is doubtful what Dunora would have said, but he did. "I am glad to go if it gives you pleasure. I have always desired to give pleasure to those with whom I come in contact."

This statement didn't exactly please Vir's then sense of egotism. He would have liked her to say that she desired to give him pleasure. After dinner was over they wended their way to their places of abode.

The next day they met at the same place of meeting which surely could not be called a trysting place, but had become a lodestone of increasing joy to Vir. They went to another restaurant this afternoon and

at the termination of the dinner he asked to go home with her. She demurred. "It is a long way from here to my house and I had rather you would see it later as it is rented by the man I kept house for. I would not go there to-night only I have a dog there that might not be fed if I don't feed him."

Kept house, her house rented, did he hear correctly? Glory! he thought to himself. He did not demur, though he longed to accompany her home and there was a growing and a rising feeling in him of desire to protect her, for an intangible something seemed to say she needed it. There was a pitiful independence in her. He was learning that her independence and self reliance were characteristics acquired of necessity and, seeing more deeply into the girl's character than perchance he at once realized, he knew her nature was far more tender and should rightly be far more dependent than it was on the surface. Like a mine of golden ore which gives only an indication of its hidden riches by its surface manifestations so was Dunora to Vir. There are some people who are like gold mines, the surface indications of which are most of what there is to them. But Vir learned that Dunora was far from that kind. The surface indications which she gave were but a small promise of what was beneath, yet it took the hardest kind of mining to uncover the hidden golden treasure.

The next day they met at the same place as before and went to the same restaurant where he wrestled vainly with a skinny fowl labeled on the menu "Fried chicken." Dunora later performed one of her many corrective functions with Vir by letting him know how poor an exhibition he made

of himself with that chicken. Following the dinner they went to the Malden Auditorium and witnessed "Shore Acres." The scene of this play is at Bar Harbor, Maine, and as Vir and Dunora met in the State of Maine it especially appealed to them both. At this performance Vir first witnessed a manifestation of growing trust on the part of Dunora, yet he had waited and waited for it long. Involuntarily, surely the girl had, at an especially rapt moment, given a delightful pressure to Vir's hand.

The play, the theatre, the surroundings were all forgotten in the blinding thrill of joy which overwhelmed Vir Noble. There was nothing studied or planned in that hand pressure and it came from a heart impulse. It exalted the man, it put a new halo around the girl in his sight. He held her hand in his for the first time and the holding of it sent spasm after spasm of emotion over him as he sat transfixed in the plush seat. Their eyes met. There was a new look in the face of each.

The play which they were witnessing was one in which the primal virtues were placed in contrast to avarice and selfishness and honesty won. It was a play of real heart interest which stirred the emotions and when it was nearing its happy climax Vir ardently longed to be amid similar honest surroundings with this remarkable girl. Again he asked her if he might escort her to her suburban home, for he longed to feel a protecting presence to her but she asked him to permit her to go home unaccompanied. With great reluctance he went to the car with her and then turned to the cheerless streets and to his cheerless rooms.

But was it so cheerless now? His hand which had

seen so much hard work had been clasped by her hand. His thoughts were with her and he was to see her again the next day and again they were to go to dinner and to the theatre.

He worked briskly with rejuvenated spirit on the following day and they met and went to dinner. At the Olympia Theatre at Lynn they saw a performance of combined moving pictures and vaudeville and one of the vaudeville offerings was of a burlesque nature which exhibited a series of successive grotesque happenings which proved more and more laughable as each appeared. It resulted in Vir's latent sense of humor appearing in active form and he enjoyed a season of merriment he had not experienced before for a long time indeed. Something of the tension relaxed, something in the girl made him relax, something from an unseen source gave him merriment unalloyed.

During a lull in the performance Dunora turned her great, honest, childlike eyes full upon Vir in a perfectly frank, utterly innocent look which drank deep of his very soul. His eyes looked full into hers and as they gazed at each other thus in absolute simplicity and sincerity Dunora's little hand crept into Vir's more fleshy one and, instinctively, both hands clasped and each hand pressed the other in a clasp which spoke aloud in eloquence most vital. That simple act made them indeed friends.

In this evening's entertainment Dunora had a lady friend come also. But to Vir there was no one present but Dunora. That evening Dunora went with the lady to spend the night at her house. Many subsequent nights were spent at this lady's home by the girl. Gradually Vir became acquainted with

Dunora's acquaintances. The word acquaintances is used advisedly here, for Dunora was one of those characters whose nature so towers above ordinary characters as to make it impossible to have friends who understand her. All her life up to this period she had been universally misunderstood simply because no one had appealed enough to her for her to show her real self.

She had admitted no one into her confidence beyond a certain point and it took time for her to see that Vir was of that true sympathetic nature to understand, so could win her confidence. Yet after that golden hour had arrived, an hour which was one of the mountain heights of Vir's life, when he came to that grand realization that he had won her confidence, he found that winning was only the beginning of the knowledge of how deep her nature was, how sublime its heights. For each new knowledge but led to one higher up until in the dizzy altitudes of Dunora's inner spirit he looked higher and yet higher into the rarified purity of her soul.

Like only one other great truth of the universe was she, and that she humanly resembled. Her character and spirit were living exponents of Christianity, for Christianity differs from all man made religions because no one can ever realize its height, breadth or depth and every mountain top in it but shows a higher mountain top beyond.

## CHAPTER SIX

### IN THE BEGINNING

**T**HREE is no comparison which can be higher. Christianity thrives amid the most sterile surroundings. So did Dunora. Christianity thrusts its head up serenely above the storms of adversity. So did Dunora her head. Christianity is:

“Like some tall cliff which lifts its awful form,  
Far from the vale and midway leaves the storm,  
Though round its base the rolling clouds are spread  
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.”

So was Dunora. Christianity shines resplendent in a world of gloom. So did Dunora. Christianity defies the temptations which besmirch. So did Dunora. Christianity, amid whatever surroundings, retains its original virtues. So did Dunora. Christianity grows more influential as time progresses; it becomes an increasingly shining light; it is a beacon of hope, an anchor to the soul; it leavens as yeast all who are susceptible to the higher influences. All these was Dunora. But what of the commencement of this life of Dunora’s. Corroborated by many witnesses and revealed by circumstance and personal revelation, it presented a tale which should be more useful to the world than that of any hero who

fought on blood wet field, for the bitterest fight on earth is not the fight amid the din of battle where men become beside themselves with frenzy and are impelled by their surging blood to deeds of fury, but the sternest fight of all is such as Dunora fought and the publishing of the details of that fight should be an age long inspiration to those who struggle upward against Satan, while yet Satan is permitted to exist. It should be a lasting help to the beset of earth to prove to them that human flesh and blood can win against overwhelming odds and that the winner will become a king or queen indeed. The fight is worth all the struggle, it must precede every crown.

At the tender year of two Dunora was adopted. From whence and the reasons for it will appear later in this story. She was totally different from the people who adopted her and grew from year to year adored by the neighborhood and manifestly disliked by her foster parents whom she for several years believed to be her real parents. These foster parents had an own son who was everywhere favored while disfavor was heaped upon the poor little life of Dunora. The little lassie wondered and wondered why her brother was heaped with kindness and she with abuse. Her parents loaded her with work when her weak little body could hardly stagger under it and her starved life became in reality what had only before lived in fiction in the works of the great masters of literature.

When hardly more than of age sufficient to talk distinctly she was placed up on a raised box before the kitchen sink to wash the dishes three times a day for ten people, more or less. These people,

church members, went through the legal form of adoption merely to get a slave. Never once did the mother say, "I'll help you with those dishes so that you can go out to play," but instead, "Hurry up and wash those dishes and go to bed."

Night after night the dear little body went exhausted to her attic room to cry herself to sleep. She was denied kindness, denied love, denied the opportunity to play with other girls, denied any of the beauties of life and beaten for absolutely excusable childish offences or no offences at all. The North rose in righteous anger fifty years ago and spent millions in lives and money to wipe out a system of slavery less hideous than was instanced in this case.

In those furtive occasions in which she could steal away to enjoy the liberty God gave her and her cruel parents denied, she had to devise her own means of pleasure. In this her character of independence was being formed which proved to be very necessary in later years. A house standing near the one in which her parents lived, Dunora was accustomed to call back and forth to another but older girl so as to compare notes as to their progress in dishes washed. "How many have you to wash?" called the little Dunora. "Oh, lots," came the reply. A little later came, "I have washed ten. How many have you?" "Eight." "Oh, I beat you," and the little childish face broke into a smile, one of those rare smiles which visited it and a smile caused by the knowledge of surpassing another being in work accomplished.

Living her own life concealed within itself and planning her own plans without consultation with any one she devised strange means of entertainment.

This was enforced upon her for the reason that whenever she did what was usual and started to ask her mother anything the conversation was always as follows: "Mother, may I——" "No you can't. You attend to your work."

Think of it! That was the method of treatment of one of the dearest bits of femininity in existence and from the hands of people who called themselves Christian. And this because, perchance, she was so very wicked as to be an orphan and didn't know it. It certainly seems at least worthy of comment that church members in what is called good standing should have been so little influenced by the real teachings of Christ and also should have failed utterly to understand the parable of the Good Samaritan. Suppose every inhabitant of just one little village in all this earth should practice the Golden Rule. It would become the most famous village on earth and would be a lodestone which would attract the nations of the world to it.

Wherever a life with any portion of loving impulses in it exists let that one who has influence upon it be sure to fertilize the roots of all that love and in so doing they will exert a greater influence upon the uplift of the world than scores of Napoleons. One loving life means more to humanity than a thousand generals, a nation of statesmen or the assembled colleges of earth. Beware of stunting a young life of a loving nature!

Dunora developed into an utterly winsome child. She began to be adored by the neighbors in proportion as she was abused, misunderstood and starved of heart by her foster parents. As each day dawned it but meant another daylight season of unremit-

ting toil for little Dunora. In addition to washing the dishes for ten people, she had the floors to wash, the carpets to sweep, the beds to make and the woodbox to fill daily. When one piece of work was done the tired little face would look up to her mother and start the request for just one atom of play or one little rest. The little lips would start the request, "Mother, may I——" "No, you can't! Keep at your work. There is something more to do." Inhuman as it may seem in this enlightened age and in such an American state as the State of Maine there actually existed such people who really did heap upon the innocent head of motherless and fatherless Dunora Whitney the labor which they, grown people, were too lazy to do themselves and who inflicted far worse things than those already mentioned.

Of all crimes that can be perpetrated those against womankind are the most criminal. There was a time when there was a matriarchate when women were the ruling sex. Then the world enjoyed a season of great freedom from all the crimes perpetrated since man, by physical force, took the helm. The matriarchate is to be enacted again. The man or woman who will in any way injure or attempt to injure another woman is a criminal indeed.

At the age of five the little Dunora was sent to school. Her speech was of that childish dialect which gripped at the heart strings.

When she was far too young to herself take part in the exercises her foster parents were invited to her school to see the annual exercises at which some of the older children were to speak from the plat-

form. With stolid little face and big, wide eyes the little Dunora watched the proceedings. There was a lull in the speaking and a hesitancy on the part of the next speaker to mount the platform. At once Dunora stepped upon the platform, bowed and said:

“Dere was a wittle berd sat on a tig.

‘Twas a tunnin wittle berd dat sat on dat tig.”

She won the entire school and audience. They crowded up around her and mothers from the whole district smothered her in kisses. A loving nature always fosters love except in foster parents. How could even the hearts of the parents of Dunora have kept from surrender to the great big heart of love in the artless, innocent child. The conquering hero, for Dunora had conquered on the battle field of the platform, was literally covered with flowers.

But her energy was evidenced in other directions for the restless little body seized every opportunity to work off her suppressed feelings. Even the crushing weight of the labor heaped upon her in her parents' home only served to compress her vitality and not to expend it.

In some days there were periods of time when she could play and her play was ingenious. Between the closing of school and the early coming of the hour for her work for the supper for the grown people the poor little soul showed her maternal instinct by rounding up her train of youthful retainers who went to school with her and making them go to school to her as teacher. Doorsteps were the usual scene of the school sessions and also

Dunora's playhouse. This teaching was such real and earnest work that her scholars were advanced in the real school because of it. This is stated as a mere statement, but weigh it. A mere girl of slightly over five being so intelligent that at that early age she voluntarily took under her teaching children of her own age and caused them to skip grades.

At other times like a forest fairy she found her joys in the fields and forests and her places of play were in the aisles of the great church of the woods where the first worship of the Almighty occurred. There she learned the natural God which in later years made her unaffected by the unnatural God which people of various schools of belief born within brick or wooden walls tried to impose upon her.

What could Dunora have seen in the great cathedral of the forest aisles and what did she see? She saw them buried deep in the white mantle of snow covering every rotting leaf and dead limb with the pure whiteness of perfect purity as the mantle of Christ's pure righteousness covers these sinful bodies of ours so they too may become white as the driven snow and be presented faultless before the bar of God Almighty. And, too, beneath the mantle of snow, a type of the shroud of death, she beheld the resurrection of the Spring and knew the unseen Power which caused that resurrection. And her childish heart told her that as all nature dies and is resurrected so all natural things die and are resurrected and no man can take to himself any power which shall in any way direct God as to what He shall do with dead nature or dead natural creations. If men would only read nature with natural eyes and find the lessons taught there they could not be

deceived by any men or body of men who took unto themselves powers they did not possess and hoodwinked people to believe a sham.

Many other things the childish heart of Dunora learned in her hours of solitude with nature. She learned how God fed the birds of the air and flowers of the field and trees of the forest and therefore would her. She learned the lesson that out of what we call the dirty earth God raised the purest flowers and that therefore out of the humblest human beginnings the Almighty can cause to grow the noblest human beings. And then also she learned from seeing the polished round stones that only by friction can stones, or character, become round and smooth and beautiful.

As a consequence of these lessons learned at first hand Dunora acquired a knowledge which made her seem all the more uncanny to creed bound neighbors. She also was a most natural little girl and her childish efforts to always appear guiltless of doing what often her wayward fancy made her do were very funny and very winning.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### THE WEE LASSIE

DUNORA," and Mrs. Whitney stamped her foot in anger, "didn't I tell you not to cut your hair?" The wee face of the orphan girl took on a wistful expression mixed with one of surprise. "Yes, mama, but don't you s'pose a wittle tunnin mouse just tame and bit it off when I was asleep?" Who would not laugh at that childish effort? But Mrs. Whitney knew not how to get ahead of that girlish brain. In fact never a day passed but she was put to her wit's end to know how to keep from being outwitted. The reason of the absence of love between Dunora and her foster parents may be partially accounted for by one set of reasons having to do with the personal character of her parents and by another reasoning on account of the very first reception the poor orphan lassie received when robbed of real parents and cast on the world alone and oh, so loving.

Into the new home the wee lass came at the tender age of two years. There had been a court ruling as to who should have her. Several families had desired to bring her up. As the little girl entered the new home all bewilderment and all innocence, the woman who was to act in place of her dear dead mother stood before her. With a heart brimming

with love, Dunora's little arms went up to the foster parent asking dumbly to be taken up and loved. Her foster mother stepped back and folded her arms across her chest. Dunora looked a moment in bewildered surprise, turned on her heel and went across the room to play with her doll. From that moment the little child saw the hopelessness of arousing love in that heart. Her own love was crushed at its birth by the sternness of her foster mother.

The only place in which she could give vent to her overflowing spirits was in school, for she was not even allowed outside of the yard to play. Two teachers in the little natty grammar school of Gardiner will long remember the little girl whom they loved and who was their favorite scholar.

Dunora's daily program was to arise at about five, clear up the house, set the breakfast table, feed the hens, pig and cow and drive the cow to pasture. Then she ate breakfast, washed all the dishes, swept the downstairs rooms and then made her bed. After this she walked two miles to school. Subsequent to the morning session she walked home and there had to get her own dinner, as her mother thought it hardly worth while to get anything warm for her.

Then it was two miles return to school after the noon dishes were washed. This made eight miles walked each day to and from school Spring and Autumn. In the Winter, Dunora took a lunch which she herself prepared and it was usually eaten away from other pupils who brought lunches put up by fond mamas. Dunora did this for fear lest the scholars laugh at hers. It consisted of almost any leftovers she was fortunate enough to find. How quickly Dunora would have eaten even that poor

food smilingly if her mother had but shown regard and kissed her each morning when starting alone for school.

At school her bubbling spirits made her the quick wit of the schoolroom. One day her teacher asked her what she had in her lunch basket. "Grub!" replied the child. "Dunora Whitney, answer me properly. You know what you should say. What have you in your lunch basket?" "Victuals!" came the prompt response. The scholars burst into an audible titter. "Dunora, march out into the hallway and stay there until you can tell me properly what you have in your lunch box." Dunora marched in military fashion to the outer hall.

A short time thereafter the teacher went out in the hallway and asked the little girl if she was ready to come in and stand before the school to tell in proper words what she had in her lunch box. Dunora replied that she was prepared to do so.

In walked teacher and pupil. The stage was set for the great act of repentance and all the scholars waited with breathless anticipation for Dunora Whitney to humble herself. She stood calmly facing the school. "Dunora Whitney," asked the teacher very solemnly, "what have you got in your lunch box?" "Nothing," came the astonishing reply. The teacher lost her poise. "Why you have food in it, haven't you?" she hurriedly asked. The little girl smiled. "No, I ate it in the hall."

For quite a time even extending into many weeks Dunora sat in the front row of seats exactly under the eye of the teacher. She was a model pupil and gained the confidence of her instructor. A number of boys in the rear of the room were usually occu-

pied with schemes to arouse excitement and the teacher was perplexed as to how to surmount the difficulty. A happy thought came to her.

“Dunora!” she called one day, “Come here!” Dunora obeyed. “Dunora, you have been a model child. I have had you here on the front seat for so long a time that I have come to know you and believe you are the very one I should place among those unruly boys in the rear of the room so that your good example may influence them to better behaviour. You may come with me and take a seat there.”

Dunora made no reply, but silently followed the teacher to the seat assigned where she was surrounded by the boys. Dunora had made no promises and she saw a golden opportunity to raise the safety valve of her bubbling spirits which were made to seethe all the more violently because of their being crushed down at home.

For some time after her being seated in the rear of the room her influence surely subdued the boys. But not for long. Snickers became audible. “What are you snickering at?” demanded the teacher of one of the boys. “Nuthin!” he responded, not being willing to tell tales about a girl. Soon the teacher would have to speak again. “Dunora, what have you back of that geography?” An innocent little face peeped up in bewilderment and the geography which had been upraised was carefully closed. “Geogafy, Miss Cannon? Why nuthing.” When the inquisitive eyes of the teacher were withdrawn the geography was reopened and the beetles, caterpillars, and various kinds of bugs fell down and performed again. With them Dunora had also a rag doll with hair of corn silk, the doll being the work of her own

hands. The rag dolls were most laughable for they were made of handkerchiefs capable of all kinds of ludicrous movements. The handkerchiefs were usually borrowed ones which were subsequently returned to their owners in the form of dolls until the whole school or a good portion of it had performing mannikins. Dunora was never caught in this innocent play.

Naturally a girl of so great activity was very bright mentally and was one of the best little speakers in the school. At every school exhibition Dunora's name was prominent on the program. At about this age Dunora was accustomed to go bare-footed in the Summer or else be obliged to earn her own hosiery. By picking blueberries with bare and bramble torn legs she earned enough to buy herself stockings full of open work which especially pleased her and filled other children with envy. Surely thus early were the hard necessities of life brought home to the little girl.

In our mind's eye there may have come at this time a mental picture of the scenery amid which these acts were performed yet the mental idea may be entirely wrong. Let us place before ourselves the actual scene.

As you enter Gardiner, Maine, from the railroad station and pass across Water Street which parallels the Kennebec, the traveller at once begins to ascend a great hill, it being a portion of that long hill which extends into many Maine counties and acts as a wind break for the blue river below.

A stranger is very apt to misjudge these Kennebec river cities by forming that judgment from seeing only the accessible business street which is al-

most universally called Water Street. Let the stranger ascend one of the streets leading directly away from the river and up the paralleling hill and he will discover beauties unsurpassed in New England. In Gardiner you almost at once come to great canopying elms. If you have not learned otherwise you may think that the largest and finest elms are in southern New England where the climate is warmer but a journey to the north and especially to Gardiner, will prove that you are wrong.

Substantial houses line these ascending streets, each groomed with a neatness which denotes thrift and home love and each of these homes is shaded by great trees which silently speak of the foresight of some previous resident long since having finished his earthly mission.

Ascending the street we have mentioned we come to a little horizontal platform in the ascent where a street passes off at right angles. It would seem that this were provided like a landing in a flight of stairs in order to give the climber a breathing spell.

Beginning the upward climb again we come to one of the prettiest parks imaginable where we will be very willing to rest beneath the cool shade and enjoy the flitting shadows of the rustling leaves playing on the greensward or ricochetting on the dimpling waters of the fountain's pool.

But the journey leads beyond to the mighty buttresses of Iron Mine Hill where grows the giant pine which from time immemorial has defied the stormy blasts of old New England and, if the surrounding panorama were seascape instead of landscape, would have been the beacon by which mariners would have shaped their course.

And now that same road which extends up the river paralleling hill and by the park leads you out into the country and soon it passes fallow farms where, in Spring, the bobolink chortles to his mate and, occasionally, the bald eagle soars overhead. Alongside the farms the elms are replaced by great maples and, at the very beginning of the habitat of the maples stands the natty red brick school-house where Dunora Whitney went to school.

During these early years Dunora had but one real playmate among the girls. Rena was her name and she lived in a farm house so near that the two could speak back and forth. Occasionally the mother of Rena would come over to the Whitneys and ask if Dunora might come over to play. This request was usually granted and there Dunora had about the only joy of her childish life. Rena and she were bosom friends and shared confidences. One day when Dunora was calling Rena said, "Oh, Dunora, just think, I am learning to iron." "Learning to iron," exclaimed the astonished Dunora. "Learning! Why I don't remember when I didn't know how." She was then about eight. And it was a fact that even at that age the neighbors brought in their fancy ironing for her to do and paid her pennies for doing it.

In Rena's great barn a big swing had been placed and the two little girls swung there to their hearts content. Many a day they vied with each other to see which could swing higher among the rafters. And then the goat. What a knowing goat it was with an appetite which attacked anything and everything, even to the girls' clothes. A little two-wheeled cart had been arranged and the usual route over

## 70     *ONE WONDERFUL ROSE*

which the goat carried them was down the hill for a certain distance to a certain spot beyond which no persuasion could make him venture. In his goatish brain there existed a seeming delusion which made it very necessary to proceed no further than that spot. Upon arrival at that spot he promptly turned sharply to one side always spilling out the occupants. As the cart was so small the two little girls had difficulty in squeezing into it and when they did so they made two human sandwiches with very little air sandwiched between their limbs and bodies. After spilling them out, always on the same rock, his goatship would canter back to the hilltop expecting them to follow only to be respilled.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### DUNORA'S GIRLHOOD HOME

THE scene of Dunora's girlhood activities on Iron Mine Hill suggested anything but the bloodless tragedy enacted there. In passing it offers an opportunity, perhaps best not to pass, of remarking what a world this would be if the human portion of it were always of loving natures. Love is the antagonist of selfishness. Dunora's nature was founded on love and she therefore could not be and was not selfish. The horrors of present existence are all the outcome of selfishness in individual, government or corporate form.

After passing the red brick schoolhouse on the road from the Gardiner railroad station, if you wish to reach Dunora's girlhood home you must continue in a westerly direction past more than one sunny home until another street crosses at an acute angle and extends easterly back over Iron Mine Hill down to and across Cobbosseecontee Stream. Shortly after turning to the right onto this new street you will come to a white house facing north and this was the home of Dunora. It is the second house on the right after turning the corner.

In the corner of the yard stands a pump the handle of which was often worked by Dunora's youthful hands. Back of the pump and between the

western fence and the house is the attached barn with its many nooks and corners offering chances for hide and seek and such games. From hence every morning Dunora took the cow and thither she drove her at evening. Here also her little secrets were told to the never gossiping walls more kindly than human ears which would not listen or understand if they did listen.

The house is planned to have five rooms on the first floor and five on the second. On the first floor are the kitchen, dining room, sitting room, bedroom and parlor and on the second floor are the front bedroom, middle bedroom, bedroom under the eaves where Dunora slept, bathroom and unfinished attic.

In the parlor slept Dunora's grandfather who filled the room with his trunks and belongings. This man was Dunora's foster father's father. One of his great passions was his absolute knowledge of his possession of a through trip ticket to heaven. He constantly brought up this subject. At the dining table one day he got excited on the subject and spearing a piece of beefsteak on his fork he raised it upward and exclaimed: "I am as sure of going to heaven as I am of eating this piece of beefsteak!" Dunora seized the beefsteak from his fork and swallowed it. It may be added that at this writing the old gentleman is yet in the land of the living, although considerably over ninety, there seeming to be reluctance on the part of the powers that be to dispatch the parlor car on which he feels he is so sure to travel. It surely seems that the heavenly hosts are not over anxious to associate with him and we may infer that his life was not good for only the good die young. In fact three of his wives

died from abuse. Yet of all the family associated with Dunora this old man was the only one who showed any love for her.

Dunora's mother was entirely heartless as to the little girl's feelings. Every dainty was saved for her own son and kept from Dunora. This mother would bring home oranges from the store and hide them away so that Dunora would not find them, and when the little girl was not near the mother would bring them out and give them to her son.

Why should she be kind to the little waif on life's bitter cold sea. She had committed the unforgivable crime of becoming an orphan. The parents who had adopted Dunora were old school Baptists. In their utterly loveless faith and creed Dunora was born accursed of God and predestined to damnation, so why heap affection uselessly on one whom God had damned? And they went down on their holy knees and thanked their God that in His great mercy He had ordained that only old school Baptists should become God's elect and that the rest of the world He had also ordained to damnation. Oh, God, how great and damnable works of the devil are done in Thy name.

And these people deluded themselves into the belief that a God worthy of worship had foreordained that all but old school Baptists were damned to not only damnation but never ending torment for absolutely no reason at all. Simply God was such an inhuman beast that no human being could think up a devilish enough torment with which to equal the torture God would inflict for His pleasure.

In one way and another this was directly and indirectly dinned into Dunora's ears and she was

made to understand that no matter how good she was it would make no difference with her eternal destiny. She was born damned and she would stay damned. With this entire lack of incentive to do or be good is it not a miracle of God and a marvellous character of Dunora that she was and is good?

And all this time the little Dunora was entirely unaware that these people were no more relation to her than that Mrs. Whitney was Dunora's real father's sister. Dunora all the time thought that Mr. and Mrs. Whitney were her real father and mother and that consequently her own name was really Whitney. And she wondered and wondered why she was not loved. In her little mind she again and again pondered and tried to decide why her brother was always preferred before herself and why God was such a cruel, heartless and fiendish Being as to foreordain that innocent people unborn should be precondemned to everlasting damnation. And again and again when she was taken to church the elder, as he was called, preached the brutal doctrine that only the church would be saved from the world's condemnation and that the old school Baptists were the Church. In Dunora's mind, however, there was born an inherent common sense and common loving kindness which told her differently. In her little bed at night her first prayer was, "Oh, God, why did you let me be born? Why did you let me be born if you were to torture me for your own pleasure? Oh you can't be that kind of a God."

She knew, down deep under the cover of her subconscious self, that her parents did not know God.

Eight miles to the south and in the city of Richmond, Maine, lived Dunora's own brother. At the

time of Dunora's adoption by the Whitney family, her brother Eugene had been adopted by a family in Richmond. The two families visited each other at times and Dunora was told that Eugene was her cousin. Time after time the brother and sister were together not knowing the closeness of their relation. And, according to the laws of nature, there sprang up an affection between the two which should have been. "Mama," more than once said Dunora, "why is it that I like Eugene so much better than I do my own brother?" But the mother never told the true reason. Deceit always brings its penalty and, years later, it brought a terrible penalty to Mrs. Whitney.

As has been at least indicated, back of Dunora's feeling that she had not been introduced to the true God, there was a yearning for a God of love to take the place of the God of hate. Matters that bordered on the really religious interested her. At one time when she was in her fifth year there was to be a public baptism in a nearby pond. Dunora and Eugene attended. To the little girl it was a very serious matter and she was so impressed that every word the minister spoke in the service engraved itself upon her mind.

As they trudged back toward Iron Mine Hill there was a long period of silence. Dunora was deeply thinking, much disturbed, greatly impressed. They capped the top of one of the rolling hills and the beautiful panorama of the countryside of the State of Maine spread before them. They reached home without much comment on the scene they had witnessed and then the brother and sister went to drive the cows home from pasture. Way out in the country, far from any house, Dunora turned toward her

brother and said, "Eugene, I want to be baptized." To Eugene it was a joke for a great mud puddle was near and his sense of humor was highly pleased at the chance to duck his "cousin" in the dirty water. He was more than willing. The little girl repeated to him the words he should say and he baptized her in the mud puddle, exactly repeating the minister's words. Was not that baptism more sincere than many in gilded edifices? They returned to the farm of Eugene's foster mother, Dunora's Aunt Etta. She was horrified at the sight she beheld. There stood the formerly clean Dunora, now mud from head to foot. "What have you been doing?" she asked. "Eugene baptized me," was the reply. "Come in here and let me clean you up before your mother sees you. Aren't you afraid your mother will whip you if she sees you?" "How can she whip me for being baptized?" Dear Aunt Etta she was one of the chosen ones of earth. She, at the time of the death of the father and mother of Dunora, wished very much to have Dunora come to live with her. Had Dunora done so her younger years would have been surrounded and enwrapped in true love and this book might never have been written. But Dunora's brother Eugene was adopted by Aunt Etta.

Aunt Etta was not the possessor of an over abundant supply of this world's goods but she more than made up for it by being the keeper of an abundant supply of love. Dunora she loved and the girl returned it with interest and came to her house whenever she could. Witness the return after the baptism. Then her Aunt removed her muddy clothes and washed them. The little girl sat before the fire

while Mrs. Niles dried and ironed the washed clothes. When Dunora returned to her own home her mother saw nothing to disclose the nature of what had been done in the muddy pool beneath the canopy of heaven. Aunt Etta was the haven of comfort for the little girlie and gave the only evidences of motherly love shown in those days. On those occasions when the little girl was visiting at the Richmond home Aunt Etta frequently gathered the lassie in her arms and crooned over her, patting and smoothing away remembrance of her home abuse. Among the delicacies produced and much enjoyed were cookies from the never empty pantry and cream from the well's cool depths. Mrs. Niles was the only person who obtained love from Dunora in those early days.

Consequently when the news was broken to the eight years old girl that her Aunt had passed beyond she was grief stricken. When her parents gave this news to her her aunt was not only dead but buried, and the poor comfort of attending the funeral was heartlessly denied the child. In the years that followed Dunora was thus denied the only love she had ever experienced and memory was the only influence in her life which could bring anything lovable. Imagine, if you can, this young and loving child with her childish affections starved at their fountain head in all but one direction and then have that one wellspring snatched away with the additional sting of her parents' act in not letting her see even the dead face.

## CHAPTER NINE

### DUNORA FINDS TRUTH

DUNORA WHITNEY sturdily hastened into the yard from the next door neighbor. Her face was gray as ashes and on her countenance was a look of mingled wrath, astonishment, sorrow and determination which should have been utterly foreign to a girl of nine. Mr. Whitney was chopping wood as she entered and looked up at her advancing form and what he saw on her face made him pale too for a reason he knew not why but was soon to learn.

No word of introduction was spoken, none needed.

"I hate you! I hate you! You said you were my papa and you aren't! You lied!" The man stammered, "Why, why, Dunora, of course I'm your father! What makes you talk such nonsense? Who said such a thing?" "Alice did and it's the truth!" Dunora rushed by toward the house and the next victim, Mrs. Whitney. But as she passed Mr. Whitney she did not fail to hear his anathema, "I wish Alice's head was under this axe!"

The maddened, outraged and infuriated girl rushed into the house through the kitchen and dining room into the sitting room regardless of banging doors. If ever righteous anger gleamed from absolutely frank eyes it blazed from the eyes of Dunora. It was as foreign to Mrs. Whitney as is

righteousness to the devil. She quailed before that look for she beheld a reborn child. "Now I know why Ralph gets everything and I get nothing! Now I know why he goes everywhere and I stay home! Now I know why I have to carry wood and he doesn't have to! Oh why did you lie, lie, lie to me? Why did you take me for your little girl if you were going to hate me? I hate you!" Then the heart-broken girl ran upstairs to her miserable bed and fought it out in tears. All the remainder of that day and evening and all that night Dunora remained in her bedroom unfed, unattended and miserable.

From the look and words of Dunora Mrs. Whitney had made no reply beyond opening and shutting her mouth. On her bed of misery poor Dunora remembered the bitter accumulation of the past inhuman years. Dunora had been a child full of fancies and full of fears. She feared a flying feather. When barely four the little girl was driving the cow to pasture. Upon coming to the pasture bars the cow waited for her to lift the wooden rails and innocently turned her meek face toward the following lassie. Dunora, terrified, ran home. Mrs. Whitney beat her for being frightened and drove her back. A kind hearted passerby saw the sobbing girl and lifted the pasture bars. She much feared a dead body, even of an animal. A dead hog terrified her. One once hung in the barn and the little girl avoided it. Her brutal father seized her in his arms exclaiming, "By God, I'll teach you not to be frightened of hogs!" carried her to the barn and wrapped her arms about the dead hog. The poor maltreated child went right into a fit and it took

them three hours to bring her to consciousness. Having a deadly fear of mice she awoke one morning only to find a dead one placed on her pillow by some one to greet her morning waking.

After that hour the little girl was a changed creature. Her foster parents no longer fully controlled the emancipated proud spirit.

Instead of being the docile acceptor of the abuse she became defiant and gave them a taste of what they had for years given her in large measure. When told to do her former work she purposely did it poorly and right she was in doing that. She purposely left soap in the dishes which Mrs. Whitney was obliged to wash out and when told to wash the floor would sometimes wash a great piece in the center so as to look much worse by reason of contrast than if not touched at all. If the Whitneys demurred she threatened to run away. The very next day after Dunora's discovery of who were her real parents she was asked to perform some work. "Why do you ask me to do your work?" she questioned. "I am not your child." "Not my child! I'll show you whether you are my child or not! I have a paper which makes you my child!" The child turned away with a contemptuous shrug of her shoulder. "Paper! What's a paper got to do with it?"

Ah, there it is! Down the most distant aisles of the past of the human race comes the reverberating treble of the child's first cry. And a mother's agony ushers in that cry, that beginning of possible everlasting life. In ages remote she endured her agony in the caves and among the rocks unshielded and unaided, in these times in more degen-

erate situations, but whether among the caves or in the couch of down agony it is and no mother escapes it. It is God's way adulterated with the devil's amendment. God made that way and Satan gave the agony. But even Beelzebub, prince of demons, could not cause to falter the true heroes of humankind—women. With full knowledge that their agony was the greatest of earth women have calmly faced it. Suffering this anguish they and they alone produced the human race and without their self denial and baptism of torture would not a person live who lives today. The crowds in the streets! Each individual represents an agonized mother! The armies and navies! Every soldier and sailor represents a human female martyr! And if the tables had been reversed and men had been given that agony would the world have been peopled as to-day? Verily not! God knew who should have the honor. God knew which was His noblest creation and He crowned woman with motherhood. And in these modern times, when gold is not evenly divided and every man clamors for it, there exist those beings so base that no animal's name is base enough to describe them, who prey on womankind, possessing characters of skunklike odor, and with some of this human garbage this book deals.

And the connection between mother and child, can any paper determine that? Can any court of justice or injustice hand down a much bedignified document that shall determine the connection of heart strings, the course of affection, the ties of blood?

Ah, what a mother had been Dunora's true mother! And what a kindly hearted father had been hers!

Not at the time of her discovery of the fact that the Whitneys were not her true parents did Dunora learn who and what her parents were and the facts of her birth.

The father and mother of Dunora were married for love surely. She was very loving and worshipped Dunora's father. With such a woman the right man can attain the heights of heaven while on earth. In order to marry as she did Dunora's mother sacrificed much that is counted worth much but she gained greatly in the greater goods. For true love is true all. There is absolutely nothing else which truly satisfies or long pleases. Dunora's father was in many ways worthy of the love bestowed upon him and perhaps chiefly because of the fact that he possessed an over abundance of generosity. So pronounced was this quality that he ever remained poor because he gave freely of what he had to those whom he thought needed it more. Such generosity as was his was exceedingly unusual. He apparently had hardly a thought of himself and would even give an overcoat from his back when he did not know from what place he would get another.

While in her early years, the mother of five children of whom Dunora was the youngest, Dunora's mother caught a cold which, in her frail health, led to rapid consumption. When she knew that she must go her prayer was, "Oh, God, take Dunora with me also, for I cannot leave her behind to suffer at the hands of others." Full well did she realize the heartlessness of the world when dealing with an unprotected girl. But God knew that if the wish of the dear mother were granted much harm would be done for He knew that out of the life Dunora was

to live would come a great object lesson of what a true woman could do and which would show the hollow mockery of a double standard of morality and the hideous ulcer in some men's lives. But in those dear wasted arms Dunora's little body was wrapped in love and enfolded in those arms Dunora rested as her mother's life went out of earth with the spoken words, "Oh, God, take her with me! Take her with me!"

Ah, mother of Dunora, what a mother you must have been! Had God answered your prayer the world would never have known that a great woman among women had been born and you had the honor of being her mother. Had God answered your prayer this book, which is written because of love for what is noble in humanity, would never have been written. Would that I, too, could pay homage to you, mother of Dunora, whose mortal body rests amid the pine clad hills of the State of Maine but whose noble spirit must now be in the all loving presence of Him who did not answer your prayer but who did for you better than you knew.

While Dunora's mother was so ill that she could not lie on a mattress because her weakness made her wet one through with perspiration, Dunora was born and was a strong, robust child. But it was not on a bed of soft down that Dunora first saw the light of day. Her mother could only lie on a bed of straw and on a bed of straw Dunora was born while her father was away after the doctor. So all alone and unassisted her mother gave Dunora life.

This fair girl who became the mother of Dunora had been the belle of all the surrounding towns. Her beauty was extreme and of the Grecian type

and her disposition and character corresponded with her physical beauty. More than one offer of marriage was hers from those well furnished with this world's goods, but she refused to sell herself and married for love. To this day Dunora does not know just the spot where the body of her mother lies though the cemetery is known.

## CHAPTER TEN

### THE CLOSE OF SCHOOL

MORE and more Dunora kept by herself after learning the weighty news which had been disclosed to her. "Where have you been, Dunora?" queried her foster-mother on more than one occasion. "Oh, out in the pasture," answered the preoccupied girl. "What were you doing out there?" "Oh, just dreaming, just thinking pretty thoughts." "What were they?" interrogated Mrs. Whitney. "Oh, just pretty thoughts, pretty thoughts," repeated the child, and that was as near as Mrs. Whitney ever got to the heart of her adopted daughter.

But out in the pasture, far from disturbing human influences Dunora had built a little rustic play house beneath great pine trees and there her air castles were formed out of the beautiful flowings of her pure thoughts. She peopled the little house with the people of whom she dreamed. The purpling glens, the dark pines, the forest aisles, the rolling pastures all spoke to her in symbolic language. They were kinder and more considerate than she had found people except Aunt Etta and they listened to all her confidences and understood them for they never answered back. All the pines said when she complained of the world's bitterness was "S-o-o-o-o! S-o-o-o-o! Y-e-e-e-s! S-o-o-o-o-o-o!"

Up against the pine's smooth bark she would place her little face and say, "Just you think, pine trees, I'm going to grow up some day and have a real home where love is. You know I am, don't you, pine tree?" And the pine trees tossed their tasselated branches above her curly head and answered, "S-o-o-o-o! S-o-o-o-o! Y-e-e-e-s! S-o-o-o-o-o-o-o!" Their carpet of needles she played was the real carpet of her home and pine cones were the miniature people of that golden future of which she dreamed.

"Now, Mr. Man," she said, taking up a pine cone, "you come to our party, and, Mrs. Man, you come too," and she took two pine cones one slightly longer than the other and named them Mr. and Mrs. Man and placed them in improvised chairs beside the carefully made table where the "party" was to eat its banquet. And the directions she gave to the rapidly arriving numbers of pine cone guests made even the overshadowing trees shake with joy.

Oh those dreams! For hours she would lie there on the pine needles with her eyes fixed immovable on the heavens above which the swaying pine boughs frescoed and crocheted with their pinnate tassles. The screaming bluejays were but the heralds announcing, "Come! Come!" to the forest home of Dunora. And the cawing crows were the sombre hued pessimists who said, "Pshaw! Pshaw! Pshaw!" to the whole invitation of the bluejays. And the finches, wrens, warblers, nuthatches and lesser sparrows which busied themselves on bark and branch and brown earth were but the welcome passers by to whom an invitation to attend was given but who were too busy about their own business to stop long

but who could not pass by without a close gaze and a cheery salutation.

She now lived almost entirely within herself and had no confidants. Her great discovery had withdrawn her within herself and created about the inner shrine of her being a sheet of armor which her foster parents never penetrated save once when her mother did many years later. And when the due time comes for the narration of that period it will be related. Years now intervened.

Over across the Kennebec on the eastern bank is situated the quiet rural community of East Pittston. From that town a girl came to the school which Dunora attended and the teacher introduced her to Dunora and asked her to make the new comer acquainted with the school. The process resulted in the cementing of a friendship between the two which lasted all through the remaining school years. The two became fast chums. Every week the girls alternated in spending a night at one of their two houses. One week Dunora spent a night in East Pittston and the next week the chum spent in Gardiner. The times when they were together were rare times of pleasure for the two girls. They had both now arrived at that age where each acquired a boy sweetheart and these two also alternated in their visits to Gardiner and East Pittston.

Whenever there were exercises of an entertainment nature at the school Dunora was asked to take a prominent part. Her singing voice was excellent and she sang in the school choral society and all song singing in the school. At her graduation in June of her fifteenth year she was given a part in

every chorus and every dialogue or piece where more than two spoke as well as being given a piece to speak alone. The whole graduation exercises had been built around her as the central figure. The High School had its graduation exercises at a different date and they had organized a straw ride to take place on the day of the Grammar School graduation. Dunora received an invitation to go on the straw ride.

On the day of the Grammar School graduation the fathers and mothers of all the attending children came in full regalia and clattering teams. Dunora's foster parents were, for once, proud of her achievements and prominence. All was bustle and anticipation, but the realization was not what had been anticipated. Dunora was late. The exercises finally started without her, but were halted because they could not proceed without her. People began to fuss, then to fume. No Dunora! Teachers and principal consulted their watches and then themselves, but no Dunora came. Half an hour passed, then three quarters. Dunora became the most talked of person in Kennebec County during that time. But she utterly failed to appear and the graduation exercises never were completed. A sadder and a wiser set of people left that schoolroom than had entered it.

Some hours later Dunora appeared at home. She had accepted the invitation to the straw ride with her chum. There were so few times that Dunora had had a good time that she seized that opportunity. Perhaps underlying it all was a spirit of not caring. So hard had been her treatment that there

had been forced upon the girl a spirit of defiance not natural.

The real start of Dunora's rebellion against her foster parents had been the great discovery of the truth concerning her real parents: But two years previous to her breaking up of the graduation exercises an act of inhuman cruelty had been done to her by her foster father which thoroughly aroused an open revolt and kindled into flame the smouldering embers of independence. Dunora had an own cousin named Ben who was about twelve years her senior. This Ben was also an own cousin to Dunora's foster brother Ralph. Ralph's mother, Dunora's foster mother, was a sister to Dunora's real father and Ben's mother was sister to Ralph's mother.

Ben was very fond of Dunora and pitied her. One day when Dunora was thirteen Ben sent a letter to her enclosing a dollar and asking her to spend it with a girl friend in having a good time in going to Hallowell, the next city to the north and adjoining Gardiner. Dunora was glad to accept and went with the girl to Hallowell perfectly innocent of even any wrong intention and there was none. She did not even see Ben. She had never been taught that it was in any way out of the usual to accept money when given and if any wrong could possibly have been construed out of it how could she have been expected to have known it without being told. This letter which Ben wrote was openly left at home by Dunora and her foster father read it. When she returned she was severely scolded.

Mrs. Whitney also said to her, "Why didn't you tell us you were going to Hallowell?" "Well, just

because I didn't, that's all. Is there anything wrong in going to Hallowell with a girl?" "Why didn't you tell us that Ben sent you the money?" Mrs. Whitney asked. "Why should I?" "Don't you know that it is wrong to accept money from a man?" The girl replied, "Know that it is wrong? Of course not. Why is it?" "Well it is." "Why, mother, Ben is my cousin, so is your son Ralph. If Ralph gave me money you know you wouldn't think it wrong and why should it be wrong for Ben to give me money, for he is my cousin just the same as Ralph is?" "Well it is," was all the reply Dunora got.

It was the custom of Dunora's girl chum and herself to alternate in seeing each other part way home from school each afternoon. The very next day after the above conversation took place it was Dunora's turn to see Beatrice part way home, so she went with Beatrice down town and as far as the Randolph bridge across the Kennebec. She returned directly home from the bridge.

Her foster father met Dunora in the kitchen. A scowl was on his face. "Where have you been?" he demanded. "I have been down to the Randolph bridge with Beatrice to see her part way home as it was my turn to go with her to-day," said Dunora. "You have been with Ben. You lie!" almost shrieked the bully. And he reached for the iron stove poker and that great, strong male actually struck the poor girl to the floor with the stove poker. She was knocked all but completely unconscious but was sufficiently herself to shriek in agony at the succeeding blows. In the shortest possible time her shrieks brought the neighbors to her assistance.

When they saw that scene their rage could hardly be restrained. Some one took hold of Mr. Whitney sternly and they all told him that if he ever lifted his hand against Dunora again even in the slightest degree they would call in the police authorities and have him arrested. Consequently when Dunora returned from the straw ride at the time of her graduation from Grammar School Mr. Whitney did not dare do any more than scold her.

Retribution for that foul deed was late in coming to Mr. Whitney but it came. Some years later he died and death was not rapid in coming. The manner of Dunora's presence in the house at that time will be told later. As Mr. Whitney lay conscious but dying every sound of Dunora's soft voice was agony to him. Retribution had come. "Shut the doors! Shut the doors!" he called. "Don't let me hear her voice! It makes great bells ring in my head!" The clanging bells of retribution.

When Dunora did not appear at the graduation exercises the school officials were filled with wrath. Her certificate of passing into the High School and her diploma to be given her upon graduation were openly torn up and thrown away. She came back and applied for them. Her maddened teachers told her she could not have them. But she insisted. Then they told her to go to the superintendent. She went. The superintendent asked her what she wanted. "My certificate," was the reply. He hesitated. Then Dunora spoke directly to him. "If you were a young girl my age and you had the chance I had to go on that ride would you go or would you stay behind and speak pieces?" The superintendent made no reply with words yet what

he did was more eloquent for he gave her the certificate.

Dunora, dear, the school has closed behind you,  
Your youthful face to see again no more,  
But ere you usher out the hours of childhood,  
Oh can't we pause and look through childhood's  
door.

The fields lie fallow with their call to playing,  
The kine with meek eyes gently low for you,  
Your rustic house beneath the pines is waiting  
For you to now begin your life anew.

Above the fleecy clouds roll on in glory,  
The river flows in gladness to the ocean,  
And every sound of nature's wild abandon,  
Sings joy and rapture in its every motion.

Dunora, dear, you stand there on the threshold,  
With heart as pure and guileless as the day,  
By every right of earth and heaven above you,  
Your life deserves to be as gentle May.

Your guileless trust in things unknown about you,  
Your heart of purest gold and mind of steel,  
But merit life's uncoined and richest blessing,  
But warrant that earth's richest bliss you feel.

And as it comes to me who write these pages,  
In vision sweet to see your dear child form,  
Oh would to God it were not my hard duty,  
To on these pages write the coming storm.

For oh, Dunora dear, it wrings my heart strings,  
    To think of days of hell you yet did bear,  
When by man's hell born and damning selfishness,  
    You every trial that comes to man did share.

And in my clouded sight I would have kept thee  
    From aught but joy's entrancing melody,  
And e'en by life itself I would have saved thee,  
    From falling in life's storm's wild bitter lea.

But He who rules with sight that never faileth,  
    And knows the end from the beginning's sign,  
Ruled with a kindlier hand than was suspected,  
    When by His hand He led thee down the line.

And so in humbleness I stand before thee.  
    Dunora, queen of women, reign indeed  
Within my heart's remotest sacred precinct,  
    That I may give to you your every need.

And as the days of life flow silent o'er us,  
    May God Himself grant this my life to be,  
That by His council He may wise uphold me  
    To bring earth's highest, truest joy to thee.

In weakness would I stop at this recital,  
    And let thy bitter tale remain untold,  
But knowing what a help 'twill be to mortals,  
    I fain would make my hand write firm and bold.

So forth and write, hand writing to his brothers!  
    Expose the hell and brave the hellions' steel!  
Strike while the iron is hot and striking  
    May those who skulk in darkness terror feel!

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### WHEN "BAD" IS "WORSE"

IT was in the balmy month of June of her fifteenth year that Dunora finished what was destined to be her last official schooling. Her heart desired a continuation of her studies in the High School. All her girlish friends were either going into happy homes or to High School and if for no other reason than worthy emulation Dunora naturally desired to go to one or the other. She fully believed that she was to go to High School. A happy home where she was she knew she could not have. Up to the age of fifteen Dunora was kept absolutely ignorant of physical matters relating to sex. Her foster mother never mentioned such matters. Dunora was absolutely innocent in mind as well as body.

But even thus early she had been exposed to serious evil. A certain woman desired to perpetrate personal hellish practices on Dunora and, to further her scheme, she invited the innocent girl to her house where young men had been previously invited and she left them together in such a way that the absolutely innocent girl ran serious danger of being misled. It was the hope of the female friend that her nefarious scheme would lead to her desired end, but, thank God, Dunora was too innocent and too strong of

character to be misled by those who cared not what the destruction of a promising life meant if only the passion of the hour could be satisfied. The woman who attempted that act which was so hideous that no name could describe it was, at last reports, occupying the stratum in society in which she belonged and was the keeper of a house of ill fame in Somerville.

School of the grammar grade was over for Dunora. She looked forward at last with well earned joy to a summer of self-enjoyed pleasure when she had done her daily work. In the eyes of all save Him who sees the end from the beginning she certainly should have had her desire but the future brought a surprise of astonishing nature.

Now that she had graduated from grammar school her foster parents began more openly to show displeasure at her. Especially was this evident in her foster father. His favorite occupation was grumbling at the inoffensive girl. She dreaded his presence and he shunned her when his laziness did not prevent him. He cast out remarks about the cost of keeping her in food and clothes and these heartless remarks cut the sensitive girl deeply. She brooded over them and at night, the poor girl cried herself to sleep. What a little bed of husks to be the downy cushion on which so sweet a body bore its bitterness!

In these days of early summer when Dunora found time unoccupied with her household drudgery she quietly went away by herself and generally down over the slope of Iron Mine Hill to the banks of Cobbosseecontee Stream. This Indian name of the stream and large lake from which it flowed was

commonly abbreviated thereabouts into "Cob'see'." Here hour after hour during those hours when she would have been in school during session time, she whiled away on the wings of thought. The broad stream, clear as the crystalline lake from which it flowed, was tranquil here because of its broadness and white water lilies bespangled its bosom typical of the absolute whiteness and equal purity of the soul and body of the young Dunora.

In Dunora's mind arose rebellion against the conditions at the place she was forced to call "home." All around her she saw other girls of her age surrounded with the beautiful surroundings which should have been hers and the objects of affection of fathers and mothers. And her proud spirit rightly rebelled. It became increasingly apparent that her foster parents did not intend to send her to High School and also that especially in the eyes of her foster father she was a source of irritation. All alone there on the banks of Cobbosseecontee Stream Dunora Whitney planned what to do with absolutely no knowledge of the world. She had never been outside of Gardiner and the surrounding towns in her life. She planned to endure the hell of her childhood's home no longer and to run away.

Among all the people of Gardiner she of course had some friends with whom she occasionally went to walk or at whose homes she called but they were very few. One of her lady friends was receiving attentions from a man from a Massachusetts city. This man had a reputation for "handsomeness." Beware of such! The true beauty, that of character, is very seldom shown on an Apollolike face. The man who had the greatest reputation for homeliness

on earth was Abraham Lincoln and in the 53d chapter of Isaiah we read of the Saviour Himself: "He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him."

This "handsome" man had an acquaintance with whom he consorted a good deal and this person was about forty-five years of age. He was a factory worker and his name was Boynton, William Boynton. Here are two characters diametrically opposed — the one an absolutely pure, uninformed and guileless girl of fifteen entirely ignorant of any of the world except Gardiner, Richmond, Hallowell and East Pittston, Maine, and the other a man of the world, sinful, cunning, calculating and forty-five. If two such characters ever met and the sinful worked on the guileless it would be very easy to determine which would temporarily attain what seemed to be the mastery. We say temporarily advisedly.

On one day when the two girls were downtown they met the two men and Dunora was introduced to both of them. She thought no more of it. When the two men turned away from the girls the older said, "Who is that dream, the younger girl?" "Oh, she lives up on Iron Mine Hill with the Whitneys." "Is she their daughter?" asked the worldlywise one. "No, only their adopted daughter. There is a report that she doesn't know she isn't their girl. Say it's a joke. Those folks up there just used her for a good thing." "She's a peach, isn't she?" "Sure thing!" That closed the conversation concerning Dunora. But it did not close the malicious train of thought in the mind of the worldly one. Oh, thought, if only some Great Power would control thee in the minds of men so as to make all thoughts good, for

then the entire world would be a Paradise where no wrong would be! For back of every evil deed is an evil thought and back of every evil life is an evil chain of thoughts and back of every evil thought is an evil inclination. May we not have more than a hope that there will come a time, for the world was not always as it is now, when evil will forever pass away? Can not One who pronounced His original work "Good" make it so again? But while evil yet roams as a roaring lion seeking whom it may devour let the story of Dunora Whitney be an inspiration which shall show that amid surroundings born of the devil's most careful preparations, the strongest protection is the strength of a right mind and that out of the depths there is One who will hear the cry of His children and will turn their sorrow into joy, their seeming defeat into an everlasting triumph.

During the intervening days, as before, Dunora spent practically all of her time which would have been school time in whiling away the hours on Cobbosseecontee's bank. She did not at first notice that Boynton found an excuse to call on her father and mother, never paying any attention to her or asking about her when absent. He was too crafty. It would spoil his scheme. Then Dunora was at the house sometimes when he came apparently to see Mr. and Mrs. Whitney. There was never an exchange of words between the two more than was necessary in conversation of passing. While calling at the Whitneys he learned what he really wished to learn, namely, where Dunora could be found alone.

Down on Cobbosseecontee Stream Dunora planned what to do. Boynton found her there. He seemed

to come by accident. "What are you thinking about?" he asked. "Nothing!" was the reply. "Oh, yes, you are. Tell me. I'll help you." Well, I was thinking of running away from home." Boynton permitted a crafty smile to pass over his face unseen to her. "How are you going to do it?" he asked. "Oh, my brother Gene will help me and take me in his home. He loves me and I love him." A look of disappointment passed over Boynton's face.

"How are you going to ask him?" asked the man parrying for time in which to think. "I'm going to write to him. I have written to him. I've got the letter here." "Let me have it and I'll put a stamp on it and post it," said the man. Innocently she handed it to him. Then he left her and she did not see him till some days after, when again on Cobbosseecontee's banks he met her. Their conversation was stiff and mostly monosyllabic on her part. Then he said to her, "What will you do if your brother doesn't answer you?" "I don't know. I guess I'll have to run away all alone."

If her dear Aunt Etta had only been alive how wise would have been the council she would have given Dunora at this time. Absolutely innocent of the world's evil ways, entirely innocent by nature because of her own guileless character, Dunora could not have entertained a suspicion against this man for suspicion, that uprooter of trustful character, was foreign to her. Not an atom of doubt entered her mind when she gave the letter to her brother to Boynton to post.

No answer coming from the letter which she wrote Dunora was much troubled. Again and again she spent her hours on the banks of Cobbosseecontee

Stream. There was no thought in her brain of the person who had promised to post the letter and she could not understand why the brother who loved her did not answer her appeal. Of all times in her troubled life this was of all times the least in which she thought her brother would fail her. Boynton played the game well from the worldly standpoint. But the worldly standpoint never permanently wins.

On his calls at the Iron Mine Hill home he carefully kept away from Dunora and craftily pretended friendship with Mr. and Mrs. Whitney yet always keeping his ears open for all that occurred. The Whitneys asked him absolutely nothing about his credentials. For all they knew or cared he might have been a criminal by actual overt act. He might have been a married man or not a married man, a forger, a murderer, a gambler, a roué or what not. At least one of those things he was.

Only often enough not to arouse a suspicion in her mind, Boynton seemed to accidentally meet Dunora principally on Cobbosseecontee Stream banks. He beguiled her into going out rowing with him and by deft action won Dunora's confidence. With confidence pent up so long in her and denied vent on the persons immediately surrounding her, it was the most natural of occurrences for any seeming honest person to win it.

When Boynton thought the time ripe and saw the torture of mind which the lass was undergoing, he again asked, "What are you going to do now that your brother hasn't answered your letter?" "Oh I don't know, I don't know. I just can't stand it at home, I must run away. I can't be any worse off

than I am here." "But you don't know what might happen to you if you run away. The world is big and heartless. I've got a plan for you. You know I live in Massachusetts. You want to go to school some more and you know your parents will not send you more." Dunora interrupted. "Oh, my parents just seem to hate me. I have worked terribly hard for them all my life and all I have from them is abuse and whippings. They give all good things to Ralph and all the whippings to me. Oh, I can't stand it!" "Don't stand it!" broke in Boynton. "That's just the point. Show them you won't stand it!" "How shall I?" asked the girl. "Listen to me. I have an aunt in a city in Massachusetts named Lynn. When I go back you just come along with me and I'll take you to my Aunt's and leave you there."

"Oh, I couldn't think of doing that! It would be very bad for me to go anywhere with a man. I couldn't think of doing it." "Oh, that's all right. I'll fix that all right. We will be married but it's only to protect you. Just as soon as we get to Lynn I will put you in my aunt's and I will have the marriage annulled."

The girl was amazed beyond description. What did he mean? She did not comprehend the true meaning of it and did not at once reply. He waited for his answer. And he did not get it at once. She looked him over trying, in her innocent brain, to fathom his thoughts. Then there passed through her mind the stern recollection of her home and of the more than apparent feeling of her foster parents that she was in the way.

"Come up to the house some day. I want to ask

something there," was her answer. He knew enough not to say more and so he left her to her thoughts after reimpresing the statement that he only offered his scheme for her protection and that if she would do it he would be very sure to put her in his aunt's and to immediately annul the marriage.

Some days later he came to the house as usual, and Dunora was there. The poor girl had no idea what even temporary marriage meant or nothing on earth would have tempted her. She reasoned in this cold blooded fashion. "If my father and mother are wanting to get rid of me so much that they will do what Mr. Boynton asks, if he asks it, it may be better than running away alone."

Boynton had made a good impression with the Whitneys by careful cultivation of all the graces he possessed and he used that to its fullest extent. With the heavy hearted Dunora listening to his asking permission to marry her of her foster parents she heard them assent. "Why, yes, if you want to," they said without consulting the poor victim. Dunora's heart sank like lead as she heard those heartless words. The steel wall again arose and within herself where should have been love came a stone.

The invitations were sent out for the witnesses to the nothing less than execution as would have been done for a criminal. They came. Before that sight of the past I shudder, my whole being revolts. When the minister asked Dunora the usual questions she opened not her mouth. The name of the person who performed this is not mentioned but he knows and so does God.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

### THE GREAT AWAKENING

AT that awakening which she did not yet know was to be an awakening, poor Dunora was entirely innocent of what was done and had no idea other than that put in her brain by the deceiver. Her life to that hour had never taken her more than a few miles away from her foster parents' home and she had no idea of the outside world. It would be extremely difficult for any person to mentally put themselves in Dunora's position. A person who has even travelled to a day's journey away from home has done more than Dunora had done to that hour. Our thoughts are all associated with locality. When we think of a person we always think of some locality associated with that person and at any moment of our lives we can summon to our mind's stage the scenery from all places wherein we have travelled. Try to imagine a little lass with none of these mind pictures and you will fail to do so. But you can readily see that her mind was one entirely innocent of any realization of anything but her immediate surroundings and what she had been taught in school. It is dreadful to think of the advantage taken of her by the man who persuaded her to do as he asked under the cloak of protection for her for that is all she thought she was doing.

Oh, if her eyes had only been opened at that time.

It was not long after the occurrence at the Gardiner home that Boynton said, "Now we will go down to Boston on the boat and I'll take you to my sister's!" "What is Boston like?" Dunora asked. "Oh, you will see," he replied. In her girlish mind she had no conception of a large building, much less a city but she was filled with light hearted joy that at last she was to be free from her foster parents and under the protection of this unknown "aunt." If one could only have looked into that childish, unsophisticated mind what a revelation of innocence would have been discovered.

She could now openly go and not as she had planned to run away and with pleasure she said "Good-bye" to her parents and as her foot left the threshold it began a journey marked, ah, marked with hellish suffering and superb heroism. As my pen reaches this point a deep seated thrill of admiration goes over me as I mentally contemplate what there lies before me to write. Dunora indeed is honored among women in that God chose her as worthy.

Dunora had been down the Kennebec once before for Boynton had taken her once to Popham Beach but on this trip she was to go out on the great ocean not only of the Atlantic but of life. Ah, if that boat could only have realized what precious freight it was carrying that night! There she stood wide-eyed, staring, innocent, girlish and her only thought was to get away from the hell she had left behind. The worldly wise hand would have kept from her the evil blasts that so soon blew but an overruling Providence loved her and had her in

hand for it was His purpose to greatly use her life for the benefit of others and to finally crown her with a crown—the only crown that fadeth not away—the crown of the love of God.

All was so wonderful to Dunora. She was filled with myriad thoughts for she was ever a dreamer. As the steamer left Popham Beach Dunora's wonder made her unmindful of her immediate surroundings. The little girl, never before allowed out of her yard to play, except on the one previous trip to Popham Beach, now began, for the first time in her life, to go beyond that first trip. There beyond her was the Gorgon eye of Seguin Island staring remorselessly at her. It was night and the phantoms of a vivid childish imagination peopled her brain. The great glaring eye became that of some supernatural being who presided over the blackness beyond. She completely forgot the man Boynton, old enough to be her father, and then begin all over again at infancy and grow to fatherhood again without adding a single year to those already flown over his head.

Seguin's unblinking eye fascinated her and she began to entertain a phantasy of thoughts which could never be portrayed but were very real. Never did her fancy roam in any direction but what might come to pass within the range of possibility. Intensely practical both from ancestry and because of her stern life she was never an idle dreamer. Dreaming was hardly the word to use for it was not permitting herself to drift mentally but rather, even in one so young, it was constructive thinking. As they passed out by Seguin onto the bosom of the broad Atlantic Boynton gave her a key. "That is the key to the stateroom," he said. She went there alone

and prepared to retire. Soon there came a knock at the door. "Who's there?" Dunora asked. "I, Boynton!" "What do you want?" "Why, I want to come in." There was a pause, then Dunora said, "What for?" "Why, you silly little thing, I want to come in to go to bed." Instantly came the rejoinder, "No, indeed, you don't get in here. I never had a man in my room in my life and I'm not going to begin now!" Boynton raved. "Why, I'm your husband; I have a right to come in there." "No, you haven't either. You just married me to take me to Boston to your sister's and you don't get in here;" and she slammed the door bolt into place more securely. He didn't get in no matter what he said. Right here she began to harbor the thought that this man appeared somewhat different from what she had expected. He had talked in a way unlike his former words. She admit him to the privacy of her stateroom! The very idea of it enraged her and sowed a little seed of distrust.

The next morning Dunora awoke to see the sight of her life. There before her lay the metropolis of New England in all its mightiness as seemed to her eyes. She was speechless. They disembarked and wandered up the streets, she utterly unable to speak. At length they reached the Public Garden and there she remained stationary gazing at the surrounding buildings and came out of her silence. "Why do they have these big, tall stores here?" she asked. "Do people live way up there?" Boynton, being a man of the world, laughed at her innocence. Then she opened the floodgates of her questioning and plied him with a cataract of interrogations.

But the tragedy of the situation is to be revealed

immediately. Boynton had deceived that girl into a travesty of marriage when his total possessions in the world were five dollars, with no business situation and not a roof under which to lay his head. Just think it over, reader. Yes—just think it over, reader. Think of what has already been shown of the wonderful story of Dunora. Think of the cruelties she already had endured and think of those which have not been disclosed and which your imagination can conjure up. Think of the happy awakening Dunora had expected from her fifteen years of heart longing and aching body and think of this beginning of the awakening. And, last of all, think of the entire innocence of the girl and the effect which such a rude awakening must produce and think of the inhuman suffering of mind which would be caused by the realization of the truth. From the other side also consider what that person has to answer for who so sinned against the innocence of this heart wrung girl.

Dunora was dazed by the sights of the great city. Boynton led her on. "Where are you going now?" the girl asked. "To Lynn," he replied. To Lynn they went and Dunora asked to be taken to his sister's. "Not now, wait awhile," and the girl was too bewildered to demur seriously. Into the old Lynn railroad station they went and up into the gallery to the newspaper stand. "What are you going to do?" Dunora asked. "Look up a room," he replied. "Why, you told me you would take me to your sister's when you got here! What do you want a room for when I am going to your sister's? Take me to your sister's and then you can go to your home." Boynton, small of stature as well as small in nature,

hereupon for once spoke the truth. "I haven't any home," he said.

"You haven't any home!" she repeated, stunned. "No," he said. Then he added, "And I'm going to hire a room and we are going there." "Mr. Boynton, what do you mean?" the astonished Dunora asked. "Just what I say!" he reiterated. "You married me and you are going to live with me," he added. She recoiled in horror. Her look was not one a real man would have cared to have faced and a real man would not have had to have faced any such look for a real man would never have caused it. "Mr. Boynton," she exclaimed, "do you mean to tell me you lied to me? Do you mean to say that you lied to me? Why I haven't married you really and you know it. I never have been anywhere with a man in my life and I only did what I did because you said you would take me to your sister's and then have the marriage taken back. Now I want you to keep your word. I am a young girl and I expect you to protect me. You told me this was for my protection and you must protect me."

"You married me and you are going to live with me, and that's all there is to it," Boynton exclaimed. "What could you do without me. You haven't any money and what could you do?" "What could I do without you? Why, just what you yourself said I would do. You told me you were taking me here to put me in your sister's so that I could have my heart's desire in going to school again. You told me you would see that your sister would send me to high school as I am ready to go now."

"Well, I can't take you to my sister's to-day and we are married and you must come with me now."

"Why don't you get one place for yourself and one for me, then?" she interrogated. "I can't." "You can't! Why not?" He put his hand in his pocket and drew out five dollars. "That is all the money I have and I can't get two separate rooms with that." "Well, you can get some more from what you have that isn't in your pocket." "I haven't any more."

The girl looked at him in a manner which indicated that she did not comprehend. Then she voiced her thoughts. "I don't understand." He repeated his words. "I haven't any more." "Yes, but I mean you can get some more from what you have saved." "I haven't saved anything," he asserted. Again her puzzled look. "Do you mean to say that that is all the money you own?" He hesitated a moment and he replied, "Yes."

Even then Dunora endeavored to look on the bright side. "You can get more money from the place where you work." He put the finishing touches on the tragedy. "I haven't any work!" Then the bravery of Dunora came to the front. "Go and get some. If I can help you get some I will. I'll be at your sister's and you can take care of yourself with that money till you get some more work."

Boynton then disclosed his hand as would have been said at a poker game. "I can't take you to my sister's now and you have got to come with me." The girl was young. She had not then fought the world. She knew nothing to do but temporarily accept the situation, but there was then born in her mind a seed which soon would bud forth into flower and the budding of which required for fertilization a degree of heroism seldom seen on a cannon rocked battlefield.

In the gallery of the railroad station he looked over the files of newspapers to find the cheapest room he could find and when he saw the mention of one the price of which suited him they started out to find it. It was near the center of the city and was an attic room! The contrast between the country home she had left and the miserable hovel under the eaves at which she was then looking was too extreme to be pictured in words. He tried to excuse it, "I can't afford any other." She thought a moment and then said, "When you spoke to me in Gardiner and told me you would take me to your sister's, you lied. And when you took me here you knew how little money you had, didn't you?" He made no response, for he couldn't. She insisted upon another cot bed being put in the room and on having a sheet hung from the ceiling to form a partition. This was reluctantly done. She kept herself entirely aloof. The room cost one dollar and a half which left them three dollars and a half in the world with no present means of getting more. That first week had better be passed over without other comment than to say that soup bones formed their food and utter misery crowned every hour of Dunora's existence.

Boynton did not over exert himself to find work. He felt that he had Dunora in his clutches and he meant to take every advantage of what he thought was a fact and felt not the slightest inclination to do one kindly act for her or in the least alleviate her sufferings. Such was the great awakening to her trip from Gardiner. Could human endurance live through it? We will see.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### THE UNSEEN STORM

It takes, perchance, the earthquake's shock  
To change the stolid, stern-ribbed rock.  
It takes the whelming force of gale  
To make the oak-ribbed ship's sides fail.  
It takes the unseen storms of life  
To cut with deeper wound than knife,  
And from the operation wild  
Produce, at length, the perfect child.

THE hideousness of Dunora's surroundings, the poverty of her situation, the terribleness of her awakening, the clanging noises of the city all conspired to produce a temporary numbing effect upon Dunora's mind. The effect of her previous life, the numerous beatings she had needlessly received, the self denials all had produced a rather fatalistic tendency to steel her heart and accept situations as they came. Weeks passed in this terrible situation for the helpless girl and thought after thought chased one another through her brain. The most depressing thing in her life thus far was the final knowledge that all that Boynton had promised her in Gardiner were lies, that he saw an innocent and helpless girl and thought he could get the better of her, that he married her under the guise of protec-

tion which he did not intend to produce, that he did not intend to take her to his sister's and that he never intended to send her to school.

Finally he got work in a shoe factory at seven dollars a week and he spent a good portion of that. Three dollars a week was the total sum on which they were fed. And Dunora made that do for food. Bitterly did she long for even the hell from which she had come in Gardiner.

"Where were you at twelve yesterday?" asked Boynton one night. "Out in the market getting food." Then she resumed, "How did you know I was out? You were at work." "No, I wasn't. I thought I would come home to see where you were and I found you out." "Yes, I do not stay in all the time. I have need of going out at least some both for air and to buy food." Boynton said nothing but a queer look came over his face. There never was much conversation between them for it became the barest existence for Dunora and Boynton lost all joy save that of seeming possession.

The next morning Boynton had a quick glancing look when he came to the breakfast table. He spoke only in monosyllables. As he arose to go to work he took the room key from his pocket and turned to Dunora. He stood near the door and shook the key toward her. "I know one thing, Dunora, today." And he smiled evilly. "I know that you won't go out to market to-day!" And he hurried through the door, thrust in the key from the outside and locked it.

For a short time Dunora stood there, as her bewildered senses did not at once grasp the situation for she had had no warning of his action. Then

the full meaning of it dawned upon her and she knew she was locked in till he returned at night. Her first thought was to scream for assistance but her second thought was to see it out and endure it, and endure it she did. All day long she was alone in that room with her thoughts and they began to focus themselves on a certain line of action. When he returned at night she made no reference to his act of the morning and no word as to any discomfort. He was denied the satisfaction which a brute usually expects from the complaints of his victim. Not the slightest word or gesture indicating anything out of the ordinary came from Dunora's lips.

Bad went to worse. If Dunora wanted a postage stamp he desired to know to whom she was going to write and then he would send her out with just the two cents for the stamp. On one of these lone trips a drunken man attempted to seize her and the frightened girl ran back to the miserable room breathless. Slowly but surely there was working in her mind a method of emancipation. She was not at first conscious of its meaning. But a happening which soon occurred brought matters more and more to a climax. Dunora was obliged repeatedly to cook soup bones and herring. On one occasion she put too much salt in the soup to suit his taste and he flew into a coward's rage and called the innocent little girl a "G—— d—— son of a b——!" Dunora was stunned. Not one of her family in Gardiner had she ever heard swear, much less at her. Not one of the Gardiner family used tobacco either and the experience just mentioned was like the cut of a cruel knife. Yet she was so overwhelmed with the

greatness of her crime in putting too much salt in the soup that she stole away to the roof to actually throw herself to the ground had she not been prevented from so doing. What better illustration could there be of the fact of her remarkable innocence and innocent exaggeration of a mistake into a heinous crime and even then the mistake was probably not made.

How well it also illustrates her sensitive nature and this additional astounding fact—that-she-had-actually-rather-kill-herself-than - even - offend - the - physical-taste-of-a-person-she-loathed. Could a better example of genuine unselfishness be conceived. I trow not. And think of the crime of cursing with an oath a child like that!

Oh lassie wee, before thy humble self,  
I fain would do a reverential act,  
For I have never seen the wide world o'er,  
Self sacrifice so surely made a fact.

I feel that all my boasted gain were naught,  
That any virtue I could claim were dross,  
That all the claims I have on being good  
Were really simmered down to very loss.

And so thy beacon light of humbleness,  
Which really proves to moral greatness be,  
May always stand before me as a guide  
'Til thy true worth is also found in me.

For, as the poet says, our lives indeed  
Are not alone and solitary run  
For echoes from our souls survive e'en death  
And live while lights the day the living sun.

So praises be to Him who dwells above,  
That looking o'er the throngs of men below,  
He found you worthy of His mighty love  
And gave to me your real self true to know.

In the days that followed the little Dunora lived hourly agony. Imagine yourself in her place. Two herring for supper, a curse for grace, a frown for a smile, detestation for love. Gardiner had been a paradise to that. The mythical hell itself would at least have had fellow pity. Sordidness, poverty, ignorance, cruelty, inhumanity, jealousy, hate, hunger of body and soul were her lot.

She grew afraid of all men. One evening she had gone out to the market and, hurrying back through a partially darkened street, a brutal Italian attempted to seize her. There had been an observer who hurried over to her assistance and the Italian fled. "May I not see you safely home?" said the protector. "Oh, no, thank you, please. I had rather go alone now. You know I am afraid of you too."

Frequently Boynton said to her, "If you go out of this house to-day I shall know it and you'll suffer for it!" He kept her a prisoner. Young, defenceless, knowing no friend, not even her foster parents as such she was apparently helpless and Boynton took every advantage of it. She finally was obliged to work to get materials for her own clothes and being insufficiently fed she more than once fainted at her work. Boynton's supplying her with such a small sum of money forced her to work at the first place where she could get honorable work in order to obtain the cheapest of raiment even. This place at that time happened to be a shoe factory. One

phase of Dunora's character has not as yet been separately mentioned. She was proud of spirit and this came naturally from an ancestry of spirited blood. Being so the sordid and bestial things she endured were excessively difficult for her to endure. An insult stabbed her to the quick, a rebuff was never forgotten. She was like a tuning fork, tuned to a clear pitch to which only it responds and yet is jarred by the discordant sounds around it.

With this pride of spirit was naturally a pride in personal appearance and after her experience in picking blueberries in the Highland Pasture to buy open work stockings the miserable clothes she was forced to wear hurt her inborn feelings much. She delighted in good clothes, in ladylike appearance, in tasty surroundings.

In spite of her weight of humiliation and sorrow Dunora carried a smiling face and a cheery way. It won her more than one friend and saved her in more than one desperate situation. It lightened many another burden especially in that shoe factory. All day long, day after day, the lass worked at a machine in that Lynn factory. Tired at night she went home to prepare a meal which would only keep soul and body together and at the week's end all her toil, all her honesty, all her effort were repaid by not enough to buy more than a cheap pair of shoes or a thin cotton dress. And all this time, as all over the civilized world, her employers and employers of other like laborers were fattening their pocketbooks merely because they had more money to start with in the first place.

Occasionally, and then more frequently, the super-

intendent of the factory passed Dunora's bench and he made it a point to stop and talk with her. Little by little he induced Dunora to tell her story piece by piece and he read her misery and her pitiable situation. The innocent girl would have thought she had divulged next to nothing and her actual words said little but the superintendent surmised the remainder.

Day after day little almost unnoticed kindnesses were extended to Dunora by the superintendent or at his order. One day at the elevator, the elevator man offered to take her upstairs instead of obliging her to walk up as the others did. He offered this aid because Dunora was so cheery and pleasant. The boss of the floor was passing by and saw Dunora enter the elevator. He objected. "See here, Brown," he called out, "why do you take her up. You know the rules are that no employee ride on the elevator." The superintendent was also passing. "Brown, you take that girl up in the elevator and if I hear any more objections from you, Billings, I'll fire you."

Some days later the superintendent passed Dunora's bench and said, "Come down into my office at noon. I want to talk to you." At noon the little girl, for little girl she was, went in wonder to the office door. "Do you suppose he is going to raise my wages?" was the thought which went through her brain.

As she came to the office door it was partially open and through it she saw the superintendent sitting expectantly within. She hesitated but rapped softly and he at once sprang to his feet and threw the door completely open with a gesture intended to give the impression of chivalry. "Come in!" he said.

She followed him within and hardly noticed that he closed the door behind her. Pointing to a comfortable easy chair, he asked her to take a seat. He did not begin his direct conversation at once. She simply said "yes" and "no" as he asked preliminary questions about the factory and her work there. Then he turned onto other matters. "You are a very good looking girl," he remarked. She looked at him in mute wonder not understanding why he made so personal a remark. She made no answer but instantly wished she hadn't come into the office. She arose. He exclaimed, "What's the trouble?" "I thought you wanted to see me on business." "I do." She remained standing waiting for him to disclose his business. "Please sit down. There is no hurry," he remarked. "I have noticed your work. It is very well done and there are few in the factory who do nearly as well as you. You are fit for better things. You are not in your right place here." "What do you mean by that, Mr. Loring? I do not understand you. I am but a young girl and I cannot understand hidden meanings. You will have to talk plainly." "I mean this. You are out of your proper surroundings here. You should not work in this factory. Everything is unpleasant to you here. You should be in better surroundings and you can be, if you will. I am inclined to help you. The place you call home I have found out is a miserable makeshift.

"Now I have everything you haven't. Be reasonable. No one need know of this talk. It is between us. I will give you everything you have dreamed of if you will go away with me."

In the instant that Dunora began to surmise the

drift of his words a moment of her dreaming came. For the instant she lost her immediate surroundings and a vision came. She saw, ah! so distinctly, the hell she had been through, the starvings, the bare rooms, the early risings, the heart wringing work, the lies, the deception, the distrust, the broken vow. And over against that reality came a picture of what the other side would mean, pictured as only her vivid imagination could do and her longing for pleasant surroundings could manufacture.

All this occurred probably in only the length of time psychologists tell us a dream consumes, namely, two seconds. Then she came to herself. She arose and her soul shone from her eyes. "Mr. Loring, I did not come into this office to be insulted. I did not come here to hear the basest insult that could be given a woman. I supposed, I was coming into the office of a man. I see I did not. You would feel nicely if I went home to your wife and told her, wouldn't you? Oh, yes, you can well turn pale. There isn't a human being on earth as base as your kind. You're not a man, you are a coward, a selfish animal lower than a dog!"

She turned to go. "Stop!" he called. She turned her blazing eyes on him. "You can take your choice, you can either do as I say or you are discharged!" She walked right up to him and fixed his now shifting eyes full in the blaze of her staring orbs. "There is no name I can think of that fits you. I am not used to knowing filthy names. Oh, I was fit for a better life, was I? I was out of my proper surroundings here, was I? You were interested in my case, were you, and want to help me? You show it now, don't you? You show your true colors and

they are the dirtiest on earth! Don't think you can discharge me! Discharge one idea you have! Discharge the idea that I would ever remain in this factory longer than to get my hat! I discharge you as being my superintendent!"

Hopeless, dark, hellish grew the days and where she had been promised protection she found every opposite of it. No man is so base as he who takes advantage of a woman. The worst thing on earth is taking advantage of even an evil woman and a worse thing than the worst thing on earth is taking advantage of a woman who has even the least pretense to decency. Might never made right and never will. Selfishness never was right and never will be.

She dreaded to see him come home at night. No salutation came from either one. Worse and worse grew the atmosphere. She never gave him cause for any distrust or any complaint for she faithfully did more than need required as her great remorse showed when she was accused of having put in too much salt to suit Boynton's taste.

Now these inclement storms which beat upon this innocent young life all had their purpose, though unseen at the time.

"It takes the unseen storms of life  
To cut with deeper wound than knife,  
And from the operation wild  
Produce, at length, the perfect child."

It is a strange perversion of human nature that when a person is persecuted or wronged other neighboring persons take pleasure in joining in the persecution. It is the rare occasion when a being openly

takes the side of one to side with whom might be unpopular. A woman living in the same house where our heroine lived in the attic, lied to Boynton one night and told him that Dunora had been seen walking on the street with a man. "So you're going to play me false, girl, are you? I'll teach you to!" he exclaimed and he shoved her into an empty room and kept her locked therein twenty-four hours.

When shopping with her he would swear at her and call her filthy names right in front of clerks and onlookers. More than once people intervened in her behalf. The vilest of names were the ones Boynton chose to call her before crowds. Her flesh fell away, her mind became terribly worried. She began to age when not out of her teens. Two years of this were borne by her, every day an increasing agony. A girl baby came. Finally he began to beat her, he kicked her down stairs just before the baby was born and, longing for love, saved from suicide by the Godsend of her baby, she finally brought matters to a head by spending one night with a girl friend and the next day leaving him and passing through the door out into the world without the baby, whom she could not support, without a cent or a friend and only the poor clothes on her back.

*"And from the operation wild  
Produce, at length, a perfect child."*

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

### OUT INTO THE WORLD ALONE

OUT into the world alone! Dear little Dunora, it is a very brave step you have taken, for you, unaided, have undertaken to beard the lion in his den, to face the world where the devil rules in ninety-nine hearts while God rules in one. But God is watching you and God is going to rule in your dear heart.

He-had-struck-her. Four small words yet a world of meaning. Her wounded spirit answered not in words but deeply within. She had arisen from where she had been stricken, she the mother at sixteen! No mother lived to protect her. All alone she had arisen from the hellish blow. When he came home that night Dunora had gone to a girl friend's.

The following evening Boynton came from the shoe shop and found her in the room. The innocent baby lifted its arms to its mother. The small Boynton, for he was small, was not affected by the sacrifice she had made for him nor by the baby's prattle. "Where were you last night, you s--- of a b---!"

"Mr. Boynton, that is not my name. When you call me by my right name perhaps I will answer." "Perhaps you will answer!" he screamed. "You'll answer now, damn you!" He looked into Dunora's

white face and a look he had never seen there before calmed him suddenly. He turned to a whipped whine. "Where were you, Dunora?" he asked. "You do not suppose I would stay in this place after you struck me. I went to Miss ——'s," mentioning her friend's name. "You lie, you she devil!" he shouted. "You were out all night with a man!"

Into Dunora's cheeks there came a quick flush. There was no immediate answer made. Slowly she grew rigid then the storm broke. "You miserable excuse of a man, you will never have a chance to speak that lie in my hearing again. It is time for me to speak my mind and have my say now. For all these long, bitter months and now years I have endured what I have endured and I don't intend to any more. Once I trusted you. You took advantage of my innocence in Gardiner. I knew nothing of the world but you and I believed in you. You won my confidence for I believed you would help me as you said you would. How have you kept your word? What have you done for me? Nothing. You have starved me, underclothed me, beaten me, sworn at me, lied to me, debased me and more too and I have not turned till now but now I turn. When have you taken me to live at your sister's? Never. When have you sent me to school as you promised? Never. When have you annulled the marriage which was undertaken only to make our trip to Boston properly chaperoned? Never. You meant to deceive me in all this and I shall be deceived no longer. I am taking matters into my own hands now and at last I am myself. I'll stand your abuse no longer." She picked up her hat and went forth into the world.

Ah! but there was a terrible wrench to leave that prattling infant behind. That one fact alone proved the inhumanity of her treatment much more than words can. How much that is terrible do you suppose would be necessary to tear a mother from her only child? A mother from a child whose existence had saved her from suicide, a child which came in agony of body existing with an untold agony of mind? Ah, think well of that! And do you suppose that little lady went forth from that door with a smile on her face? Ah, far from that!

The brave words she had spoken within were forgotten when no longer they were needed and the most pitiful sight on any street that day was to be seen at that door in the heartless city of Lynn. Oh, what a pitiless blast smote the poorly clad form of the little girl, far, far too young to be a mother. What a sight was that! In cushioned and velvet adorned rooms the children of pampered luxury reclined at ease or indulged in their selfish amusements never thinking of better children less favored. And who thought of the little Dunora, homeless, friendless, penniless, childless, foodless? Only He. Oh, it seems like fiction and as if it couldn't be fact. It seems as if such dreadful things could not have happened and as if this tale must be a work of an over-excited imagination. But it was fact, fact, fact and the little Dunora faced that fact alone and unaided. All honor to her! How many other girls, if a similar situation confronted them, would have burned every bridge behind them and faced an unknown world alone?

Dunora lifted her face to the distant heavens as

she left the door of what she had called home for want of a better name. She did not voice a prayer for she hardly knew how but a great mother yearning and voiceless agony of need welled from her great eyes. She did not heed the hurrying people on the thoroughfare below for her mind was not on people but conditions. The house in which she had lived was on a side street and no one was passing as she emerged on the journey that was to be so momentous. Apparently no one observed her and the heart-broken lass slipped into a passageway between high walled houses and fell to the ground in mortal agony. Before her tear brimmed eyes sped the panorama of the past in all its hideousness, a sorry, sorry sight for a girl as innocent, guiltless and kind as ever lived. And she saw through that wooden wall she had left behind her the helpless baby, born of her body, conceived in her agony, sent by God to save her from despair and demolition—the baby her every impulse cried out for, her every feeling demanded.

And all innocent of the tragedy of suffering of its mother the prattling infant gurgled on. And in her mind's recesses Dunora heard her infant's voice and threw herself upon the ground and sobbed. Pick her up in your arms of love, oh, Thou on High! For she needs You. Human help is not near her and no human ear hears her as she rises, stretches her yearning arms toward the house and cries "Irene! Oh, Irene!"

Yet to Dunora's cry there was no response. The unfeeling walls of brick and stone made no reply and dumb nature was silent as her dumbness. The little mother bent her head after her heart's appeal and

a great sob poured out of her wounded spirit its very essence. Steeling her sorrow marked face she put forth her little foot and her journey upward in life had begun. Against the organized powers of evil and the innate gluttony and selfishness of human beings, the little Dunora unknowingly pitted herself and the path she was to tread was to be one never exactly so trodden by any mortal before, one fraught with untold and great dangers, perils of body and soul and sufferings of mind and spirit and marked by a heroism which will do untold good in the reading.

At the moment of leaving the house her mind had not formulated any plan. Her one desire was to break the environs of living hell. But now the thought came, "Where shall I go?" She had been so closely confined to the rooms where Boynton lived that she had made few acquaintances outside and she faced the world alone. She turned toward the eastern section of the city and wandered, at first a little aimlessly but her steps took a definite direction soon and after a mile or so of being alone with her almost overwhelming weight of thought she came to a small house on one of the great avenues of Lynn, one of those extending east and west and limited only by the eastern and western boundaries of the municipality. She observed a sign in the window, "Seamstress wanted." Then she went down town again, but returned.

She passed through the little yard, went up the small flight of steps and rang the clanging door-bell which echoed and re-echoed through the cavernous interior as if starting to life the ghosts of the long silent past which hurried from their dusty cor-

ners in affright only to hurry back again and relapse into the felt quiet of their customary existence.

There was a period of what seemed like very much prolonged silence following the clanging of the bell. Then, in a rear room, there was a movement. It was that of a lady who, with spectacled eyes, had been bending over some sewing and so bending and working as if she were accustomed to such work. Slowly she put down the spectacles and arose deliberately and somewhat reluctantly as if fatigued. The poor woman was tired from prolonged work. She went to the door as deliberately as she had arisen and her feet fell on the carpeted floor with a cadence which indicated a quiet and easy going disposition. She opened the door in a businesslike manner as if expecting a business call. And it was such though she did not know it. As she opened the door and beheld Dunora she asked, "What do you wish, little girl?" "I saw a sign in your window 'Seamstress wanted.' I can sew. Can I have the position?" The lady smiled. "Come in, dear," she said. The contrast between the last word and the ones to which she had become accustomed was startling to Dunora. She went in at once. "I can sew. I really can sew," asserted the girl with an anxiety which showed her exceeding desire to secure the position. "I've had experience," she added, as if to clinch the situation.

The good lady smiled indulgently. "Never mind about the experience," she said. "I know that you will do for what I want. I will tell you a secret. I saw you when you passed this house the first time. I saw you look at the sign in the window. You

looked so innocent and trustful that my heart went out to you. Your great big eyes spoke to me. I saw you turn away but something told me you would return. Three girls came here, for the situation after you went away but I told them all that it was taken for I wanted you to have it when you returned as I felt you would."

Dunora was in just the attitude of mind to have such interest as this strongly appeal to her. Not since her birth could she ever remember words as kind even as this. Her heart went out in response as much as a crushed heart could go. In this unexpected moment and when most needed she had found a friend. "I thank you," was all she said, but it meant volumes with her.

"Now you will not find the work hard. I will teach you the trade of seamstress and you can make it your trade if you care to do so. I have plenty of work and will pay you six dollars a week to start with." Dunora didn't stop to think how far six dollars a week would go in providing for the need of room, food and clothes, but she was filled with joy at the thought of a means of supporting herself and said, "I will be glad to do the work."

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

### THE CRY OF A BROKEN HEART

AS her wearied fingers finished their first day's faithful task she had to hunt up a room in which to live and her search resulted in her taking a little room on the northerly side of School Street in the top floor of an apartment house. Oh, that room in the house on School Street! Did its builders imagine such a scene in it when they built it? No indeed! With them it was a business of dollars and cents. It was also a cold blooded business of dollars and cents to the landlady who opened the door for Dunora. For Dunora it was different.

The door closed. She was alone for the first time—without her daughter. Ten words—a mental tragedy. Who can describe her feelings? Who can tell the scene those four walls saw? When once the door was closed, for the first night without her baby Dunora lost all restraint. Nothing to be seen but four silent, pitiless walls and the man who drove her from the apology for a home that he had provided was with her baby, the baby for which she had suffered inhumanly, the baby that was part of her very life and for which alone she had given of herself. The great mother yearning came and overwhelmed her in the flood of its emotion.

“Oh, Irene! Irene!” she cried, as soon as the foot-

falls of the landlady grew indistinct on the stairs below. "Oh, Irene! Irene!" was her repeated cry as she threw her little body on the bed and her whole frame wracked itself with her incessant sobs. The tears came copiously and the spasms of her anguish expressed themselves in writhings of body and writhings of heart. Her grief was overwhelming. And the clock struck nine. Each beat struck a thrust into her very soul. And on went time in that hellish night. Can you imagine, youthful mothers, the feelings you would have if you were torn from your first born thus, if since birth two little arms had twined around your neck at night and a little voice had said, "You seep, mamma?" And mamma had pretended to be sound asleep but had seen through even closed eyes the little part of her own body creep up and look over to see if mamma's eyes were closed. And the clock tolled ten on Dunora's wide, streaming eyes.

The mattress became wetter and wetter. "Oh, baby, baby," moaned the poor Dunora as she tossed to another side of the tumbled bed. "Oh, baby, baby, b-a-b-y! ! !" And then, "Irene. Irene!" And this till eleven was struck on the church bell.

Her eyes swelled, her breast ached, the mattress grew damper and damper until it actually grew moist on the under side. And twelve struck on the clock and reverberated through the still streets. Midnight had arrived and Dunora yet sobbed and sobbed and cried for "Baby! Baby!" And, oh, the void of those little arms around the mother's neck. And one struck. And two struck! Then temporary exhaustion came. On the nether wall the glare from the staring arc light in the street shimmered on the

plaster. Dunora's weary eyes beheld it for the first time and, somehow, the sight fascinated her. The optical illusion worked on her overwrought nerves and took possession of her. She seemed fascinated by the scintillations of the ever-changing light waves. They journeyed over the wall as if chasing one another along a never ending road, each one eager to catch its predecessor. Her mind, exhausted, wandered. She grew delirious from terrific strain and tremendous suffering. Pitiful, pitiful was the sight. And the clock tolled three. One!—two!—three! clanged through the vacant streets and into the unhearing ears of the suffering girl. "Yes, dearie, yes, mother's coming!" and she put up her arms toward the shimmering light on the wall as, in her delirium, she saw the toddling feet of the little Irene trudging down that road of glory. "Just wait, precious! I'll catch you!" and she arose from the drenched bed and staggered toward the lighted wall with outstretched arms to clasp the Irene of the vision. "Mother's coming, dear, don't fall! I'll be there! Steady, dear!" and her dear outstretched arms buckled to her body as she crashed against the stone-like wall and fell in a heap on the floor.

The blow brought the tortured girl out of her vagary and to her right senses. With a wide-eyed stare around from where she lay in a pitiful heap she gathered in her surroundings and circumstances. She arose with an unsteady motion, to her feet. Then her arms were thrown upward instantaneously and there came from her beautiful lips a long drawn, pitiful, agonized and tremulous wail like the long drawn agony of a departing soul and the dear child mother fell absolutely unconscious to the floor. Long

her form remained there prone. The clock slowly tolled four and still the form of Dunora lay on the floor unconscious. Another long hour went and one—two—three—four—five struck and Dunora had not moved. The bird life of the city stirred, but the poor girl heard not and when one—two—three—four—five—six clanged out and the hurrying feet of the early toilers went by Dunora heard not even that. Seven tolled and she lay there. Eight struck with no movement on the little mother's part. There came a knock at the door. Dunora heard not. It was repeated but she did not answer the summons. Then the door was shaken but it made no impression on the unconscious form of Dunora. The messenger concluded that she was not there and went away. He was the son of the seamstress for whom she had gone to work the previous morning. When he returned without Dunora the good lady sent her daughter, for she felt that something was wrong. This girl came to the door between eight and nine and she knocked and the unconscious Dunora heard not even then. But the girl caller was prepared for eventualities and she took from her pocket a skeleton key and turned the key in the lock on Dunora's door. When the door was opened the sight that met her gaze made her gasp with astonishment. "My God!" she exclaimed with the first cry of the utterly astonished. She flew to the poor, prostrate form and picked the unconscious Dunora up in her arms. Then she rubbed her face and breast and, as she didn't arouse, the caller rushed for a tumbler of water and returned to rub it on Dunora's face and chest.

Then slowly the great suffering eyes rolled open

and stared blankly at the girl who held her propped up in her arms. She did not speak. She did not understand. "Dunora! Dunora! Don't you know me?" spoke the girl. Finally Dunora found words. "Where am I?" she asked.

"Never mind where you are, dear, now. You'll come with me soon where we will care for you." And she put Dunora, whose rumpled clothes bespoke the night of horror she had spent, on the bed. Finally, after she had been cared for and soothed enough, the girl took Dunora out and gave her a hot dinner. It was the first respectable meal she had eaten for many, many weeks.

When she arrived at her place of work it was with swollen eyes and puffed cheeks and every other sign of her fearful night. She was woefully weak but took up her task with the bravery which always characterized her. That afternoon, late, great joy came to her for she went to the place where Irene boarded and clasped her in her arms. Did that night just passed come up in her mind? Did the contrast between that night and having Irene in her arms come up in her mind?

Irene was a most endearing child. Dunora was accustomed to sleep beside her crib and early in the mornings the little girl would peek up over the iron rail at her apparently sleeping mother and then slowly creep over the rail onto the bed and behind Dunora where she would cuddle down saying, "I know I'se naughty but I wants my mamma." Then invariably the little hand crept over the body of her mother and rested lovingly around her neck. And with a mother so lonely, so denied the lovely and enjoyable things of life can any one else appreciate

how fully that youthful mother thrilled with that touch.

"Oh, Irene, Irene! Mamma never even knew how much she loved you till last night. Dear little girlie," and here she crushed her in her arms, "you will never know what mamma suffered last night and I want you never to know. Oh, Irene, Irene, how mamma does love you, oh, how mamma does love you!" And the poor little mother buried her head in the bosom of her first born.

And the little lass, innocent of knowledge, laughed a childish laugh of guileless simplicity and utter mother love.

Two weeks went by and each day when not exhausted with work the Dunora who spurned all for honor's sake saw Irene at her place of boarding. With what delirium of anticipation she toiled with tired fingers through the long hours of work looking forward to the hour of meeting. The poor Dunora as well as working at learning the trade of dress-making for the pittance for which she worked also worked for her meals. Consequently from complete exhaustion she did not see Irene every day. About two weeks after the night of horror she called at Irene's house as usual. Irene always came to the door when her mother called. This time she didn't, but the lady of the house came instead. "Where is Irene?" asked Dunora. "She isn't here," was the reply. "When is she coming back?" asked the astonished girl. "She isn't coming back. Her father took her away two days ago."

The stricken girl slowly staggered. A deadly pallor spread over her features as she reeled, a pallor deadlier than ever seen there before. Into her

inmost soul was sinking the awful bitterness of the situation and it was sinking swiftly and to the very bottom. All this transpired quite instantaneously as the girl reeled from the deadly blow. Then, before Irene's landlady could really grasp the situation or seize Dunora, she fell senseless to the piazza. And it was a deadly senselessness, not an ordinary faint. Surely it was the giving up of all but life. Every effort was made to restore the poor girl to consciousness but each effort and the combined efforts were of no avail. Her heart beat in the faintest of manners but she was all but dead. Tenderly those who had come to her assistance lifted her unconscious form and carried her to her room on School Street. No assistance they could summon succeeded in arousing her from her coma. Soon she grew delirious and raved of "Irene! Irene!" simply repeating the name of her child in a tone which would melt the heart of the most stony. And hour after hour she repeated that heartbroken cry in the hour after hour lasting unconsciousness. Finally food was given her by hypodermic method and forced feeding through the mouth. And the hours of unconsciousness dragged into further hours of coma and the hours of coma dragged into the night and the succeeding day of that almost imperceptible breathing, that hardly distinguishable heart flutter and—oh that almost never ceasing cry of "Irene! I-I-I-r-e-e-n-e! Oh, Irene!" Nero in all his callousness, the very personification of utter heartlessness, could not have withstood that constant reiteration of the wail of a mother's lacerated heart. The next day she failed to rally, and the next and the next and a week elapsed and she was yet un-

conscious. Two weeks passed with no sign of life except the intermittent breathing and then the third week began—and it ended with Dunora still unconscious.

Could—any—person—have—suffered—more?

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

### HOPELESS DAYS AND A WEARY ROAD

THE terrible days of strain for the watchers at Dunora's bedside drew to twenty-one in number. Our language, although the master language of earth and a compound of all the best in other languages, does not possess in all its varied vocabulary words which will truly describe the terrific blow the news had been to Dunora. To have caused a fainting spell of a few minutes' extent would not have been extraordinary but—to even have the unconsciousness extend over one hour was most extraordinary, very extraordinary, indeed. When that hour lengthened into a forenoon it was worthy to attract wide attention but when the stricken girl was oblivious of her surroundings for twenty-four hours it is doubtful if a similar occurrence had ever taken place on earth. Multiply that twenty-four hours by twenty-one and the astonishing result of five hundred and four hours is obtained. And for more than five hundred and four hours Dunora was unconscious as a result of the information given her by that landlady.

As the first day of the fourth week began to dawn only her girl room-mate was left of those who had watched. The remainder had proved unfaithful to the opportunity to serve one of the most deserving

of God's human creatures. But the room-mate proved faithful to the task of affection. Slowly the darkness of the long night of unconsciousness and the mists of sweet oblivion passed from the dear girl and gradually those great frank eyes opened—to what? To a merely bare room, to one penniless faithful watcher, to a lost position at the dressmaker's, to an empty pocket book and gnawing hunger.

"Where—where am I?" Dunora asked. "Right where you are safe, dear," answered the room-mate. "Who—am—I?" queried the bewildered girl in a second utterance. "Your own dear self. Now go to sleep, dear, you are tired," and her unconsciousness had worn on her so that she fell into a natural sleep which the watcher assisted by remaining perfectly quiet.

Quite a time thereafter Dunora awoke. She, at first, seemed to have no recollection of the act which had caused her awful loss of life's functions. It is certain that her room-mate, Olive, did not assist her in remembering the past and it is also certain that Olive did all in her power to turn her mind from any chance remembrance of what had occurred. Olive truly deserves more than a passing reference. Nature had endowed her with no large measure of physical attractiveness, yet it is a quite frequent act of Nature to make a homely exterior be but the earthen framework which supports an interior of sterling worth. Such was Olive. Years later Dunora was enabled to repay her in part, but such deeds of human kindness can never be fully repaid on this earth. It is such acts which make the wheels of existence run far more smoothly, it is such acts that take the sordidness out of a sordid world.

As soon as Dunora awoke from her sleep she said "Olive, I am hungry." Over Olive's face a peculiar expression flitted and there was a momentary hesitation. "All right, dear," she responded, and went to a cubby hole from which she took two doughnuts and brought them to Dunora. "I do not think you should eat much at first. Your stomach is a little weak and you have been having a little time in which it didn't act well." "Didn't act well! What do you mean?" Olive had said too much and hastily beat a retreat. "Oh, you know I meant that your stomach has been weak as you know." "Oh!" said the now satisfied Dunora.

She ate the doughnuts with relish. "Oh, Olive, I am so hungry. Do you suppose more food would hurt me?" Olive grimaced for she didn't wish to even evade the truth. "I do not think it would be best for you to eat more now," she replied. Dunora, when she had eaten, fell to dreaming day dreams. She was fortunately kept from realization of the past three weeks before. Providence blesses in ways at times when it also purifies from dross by seeming severe methods.

Olive sat looking at her day dreaming and so blessedly unconscious of the weeks of unconsciousness through which she had been. Again stupor overtook Dunora, for it is not suddenly that the full awakening comes from such a stupor. Olive did not in the least disturb the convalescing girl and only thanked fortune that Dunora was coming on nicely from her long oblivion. And she also dreaded the awakening to full understanding. By subterfuge she had evaded the direct statement that the doughnuts were all that was in the room in the na-

ture of food and that her pocket book was chiefly remarkable for being empty, or nearly so, and the state of Dunora's finances she was able to determine only by guesswork. The situation required diplomatic action on the part of Olive.

While Dunora was sleeping she examined the actual condition of the contents of her pocket book and found that her worldly possessions amounted to the royal sum of seventy-five cents. She really knew what she had before she looked, but looking again might tend to increase the size of the purse's contents by optical illusion. Yet no such illusion took place. The cold hard sum of seventy-five cents was the total sum obtainable and she had lost her position through faithfulness to Dunora and she knew that Dunora had lost her situation with the seamstress because of her long period of nervous illness. But Dunora was delightfully unconscious of these facts as yet and Olive intended that she should remain so as long as possible.

As seventy-five cents was the total sum from which she could feed both till she got a new position, Olive determined on a new strategy. Going to the table she wrote a note as follows:

“Dunora dear—

As you are sleeping so nicely I have just gone to the baker's for some food and will be right back. I only write this in case you wake up in the next few minutes before I return.

Olive.”

Then she hurried to the baker's. Her planned strategy bothered her. She hesitated as she ap-

proached the shop and paused irresolutely at the door. There were other people in the shop when she entered and that pleased her. It gave her delay in which she could muster her scattered wits. She let every person in the store have their wants supplied before she approached the proprietor. He was a matter-of-fact man which means he had little of enduring sentiment and much of fleeting matter.

"Please, sir"—and the kind girl hesitated—"may I have a loaf of bread and a dozen doughnuts?" "Sure!" replied the matter-of-fact baker. "But wait, mister. I have a friend in my room who is ill and has been for three weeks and I have watched over her. Both of us have lost our positions because she has been sick and we haven't any money hardly. I have less than a dollar and I don't know how much she has got for she is too sick for me to ask. I will soon find work and I am honest. Will you please let me charge that bread and those doughnuts and I'll surely pay you as soon as I can?"

The matter-of-fact baker looked at her with a steely glance. "Do you take this for a charitable institution? We extend no charity here. I am in this business for money, money, and this isn't a Christian institution!"

Olive recoiled from the words as a woman would recoil from a blow. The words stunned her and she took a little time to recover her poise. Then, in strong contrast to the man her gentle womanliness asserted itself. "If you were doing business in a little more Christian manner perhaps you would learn that it would be money in your pocket finally. I thank you for your kindness of heart." And she walked out of the door.

Turning to another store she paid for what she wanted and thus lessened her store of money. Then she hastened back to the room and found Dunora lying awake and waiting. "Hungry, girlie?" Olive asked. "Very!" Dunora replied. "Well, I have a big dinner here," and she smiled. "I have roast turkey and cranberry sauce, mashed potato and plum pudding with hard sauce, all sweet as honey, and—and—I have lots of other things!" And she smiled a wan smile. It was a very wan smile, very wan indeed. Dunora could hardly grasp the news, she wasn't used to such. Olive thought a sudden burst of joy would rouse her from her lethargy, even though she would have to tell her the bitter truth all too soon.

Dunora, in a most pitiful way, put forth a white hand for the expected food and did not utter a word. Words were difficult to utter then. Olive gave to her a slice of bread buttered with a very thin application of long saved butter. Dunora took it, looked at it, then spoke. "You didn't mention bread," she said. "Oh," replied Olive, "you know that bread is always put on as a first course and prepares the way for the other food. It is best to eat bread first."

Dunora ate ravenously. Olive gave her a second slice of buttered bread and Dunora was so hungry that she didn't mention the bread or remark its appearance the second time and the second slice was eaten with the gusto with which the first had been rendered fit for digestion. Drowsiness from a partially satisfied condition of the stomach began to show itself in Dunora's face and when the following doughnut was partially eaten her hand fell at her side and again she slept unaware of the moneyless

situation they faced and the void in the larder. Would that she might restfully sleep until some magic wand swung over her and performed the miracle of giving plenty.

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

### THE HIGHLAND PASTURE

**T**HREE on that far looking hill in Gardiner, Maine, is that highland pasture made sacred by myriad footfalls of the weary feet of the child Dunora. And those girlish feet seldom, if ever, were clad in any covering but walked over the bruising stubble with many an ache and leaving many a mark of the purest of blood.

A rugged grass plot divides West Street from the pasture's ragged stone wall which would have made a right angle with its apex pointing toward the house of Dunora's foster parents, had not some inhabitant of Gardiner, long since joined to those in the silent halls of death, opened that angle by tearing through the stones there and thus formed a gateway to the pasture.

Consequently, as the traveller came from the house of Dunora's former residence, he would pass through this opening in a northeasterly direction right into this highland grazing ground. The pasture strikes off in a masterful manner as if to throw its rock and earth uplands across Cobbosseecontee Stream but loses its courage at the last moment and slopes gradually to meet the kiss of the waters.

Along its West Street border seven young oaks

rear their blast defying heads to the howling north-easters which sweep down upon them in winter with the full force of the unimpeded tempest. Then two of the more graceful maples lift their Diana-like limbs as if to apologize for the roughness of their sturdy neighbors even in so wild a spot. Just beyond the maples five ghostly white birches gleam in their purity as if standing there as mighty sentinels to keep the midnight road mariner off the reef of the stone wall.

The westerly edge of the rugged pasture is shielded from any disturbing element by a sturdy wood where the pine, hemlock, spruce, fir, birch, oak and maple grow. Trespassing upon the sanctity of the pasture, the outposts of the forest have boldly taken their advanced stand and advanced their picket lines. But right here the battle begins, for the sweet fern does not permit the young growth to have its own way in its endeavor to possess the pasture but from its lesser height seems to say, "Look here, I'll leave it to the judgment of the public. Here you trees are trying to grasp everything here and what pay do you give to the people for doing so? It takes years for you to amount to anything and then you are only good when you are cut down. But look at me. Why I grow up in a season and you can't uproot me except with a great effort and all the time I live I give out such a sweet odor that I am called the sweet fern. So you see the pasture should belong to me." But the forest never answers a word but just grows and grows and grows.

Woe betide the person who tries to meander through that pasture for the tentacles of the young

growth whip him in the face, the pine boughs brush his eyes and the sweet fern clings to his limbs with a tenacity which permits no denying.

Continuing through the clinging fern in a north-easterly direction you come to a stone wall surmounted by a barbed wire fence, rusted with age, which pretends to prevent passage to the orchard beyond. On the distant hills beyond Cobbosseecontee Stream the rolling slopes are covered with thriving Baldwin apple orchards of young and vigorous growth and prosperous and well painted farm houses sit there. Had Dunora been brought up in one of those dwellings this wonderful life would never have been lived and this book never written. But it was otherwise ordained and so the youthful Dunora daily drove the cow through the stile and out into what the forest left of the pasture and there, at night, the little girl searched through the forest paths for her bovine charge fearing the leap of imaginary lynx or panther. Ah, those fears of childhood, how real they are! How you can feel the claws of the wild beast sink into your back as it leaps from every limb under which you pass. And each crack of rotting twig or creak of swaying limb sends every nerve tingling to its extremity. And how great the cruelty of sending a little girl out to seek a wandering beast in a forest at nightfall.

Just where the pasture gives up the attempt to pontoon Cobbosseecontee with its massive weight it makes a little hollow, seemingly drawing down to take breath from another attempt at proceeding to meet the opposite hills. In this hollow a clear stream flows and to cross it one must either wet their feet or clamber over the lichen covered stone wall. Then,

with a last despairing effort to rear its head the pasture gives up the fight and slopes rapidly toward the river, clothing its face in forest growth to hide the shame of its defeat.

Here the partridge drums to his mate when Spring bursts its bands and the high hole yarrups from his tree top and the hyla trebles to the evening air. While all was thus in the joy of Springtime, and the apple blossoms were in their glory in the adjacent orchard, the boat from Boston, the before-mentioned "City of Bangor," drew into the dock at Gardiner and there alighted therefrom a girl. She noticed no one, but, intent on continuing her journey, started directly toward Water Street and, looking neither to right nor left, walked up the right hand side of Water Street until it met the lower end of West Street near the bridge over Cobbosseecontee Stream. Turning to the left she began to climb the lesser hills which rose in succession to the higher eminence of Iron Mine Hill which is crowned by our highland pasture.

The territory seemed very familiar to her and she ascended the long climb with a setness of purpose which bespoke a destination beyond, which she sought with no uncertainty. Yet finally she did hesitate as wayside scenes more and more attracted her. At the beginning of the orchard, then in the full glory of its bloom, she paused. Turning to the northeast and the orchard clad hills beyond Cobbosseecontee she gazed long and meditatively in that direction and her breast rose and fell with the inflow and outgo of deep breathing. Who can tell what her thoughts were at that time? Who can tell why she lingered there longer than for the time necessary

for her rest from the ascent? And the throw back which she gave to her shoulders indicated a throwing off of some weight which had been acquired elsewhere and a breathing there again of the free air of heaven. A deep sigh of relaxation came from her as she stood there and she seemed lost in looking at the scene as if memories were associated with that vista.

Then, with a renewing of purpose, she again began climbing the hill and passed the two or three closely gathered country homes which cling to the hill just as you approach its summit and just as you leave the orchard and come to the stone wall, the birches, the maples and the oaks which fringe the highland pasture.

Here she stopped again and remained longer and her thoughts were evidently deeper. Her eyes roamed over every inch of the pasture that was visible and a look which was hard to read came over her face. Pain was in that look as well as reminiscence, and a man of inquisitive nature would have liked to have known the reason therefor.

Then she turned toward the stone wall and the entrance through it and stopped in it, again surveying the pasture. Then, satisfied with her scanning of the scene, she turned abruptly toward the more westerly of two homes, the one we have described before. Three winters had clothed those pine clad hills in snow, three summers had dressed the trees in green and three springs had glorified the scenery with their halos of apple blossoms since that girl had walked that road. A summons from the house which she was approaching had brought the girl from the metropolis of New England and the sum-

mons was one of the commanding summons of life. The Dark Angel was hovering near that highland home by the highland pasture.

The girl had written that she was coming and expected a welcome. She came to the house and saw no one near or within. At the kitchen door she hesitated. And well she might for there came to her mind her last words when she had crossed that threshold three years before. They were spoken to the thoughtless two who lived there and the words were wrung from a crushed heart—"I'll never cross this threshold again unless sickness or death calls me!" And they had called.

The kitchen door was open. In that honest country people leave their homes for hours at a time with doors unlocked. But there is an exception to this, for front doors are always locked and seldom opened, for passage to and from the interior is almost always through the kitchen door.

The girl walked through the yielding door and into the kitchen. There was no one there but the fire was burning and food was cooking on the range. So they had not gone for any length of time and she waited. But it was very strange to her for she had been summoned for sickness and no one was even sick enough to remain in the house. So the girl sat down in a chair and waited for some one to return.

A half hour later a carriage could be heard rattling up West Street and the subdued sound of the voices of the two occupants. As they approached the words became audible. The girl in the chair in the kitchen turned pale as she heard one of those voices. Three eventful years before she had heard that voice in scolding tones and it was the difference

in the tone of that voice that had made the girl turn pale. Three years before it had been harsh and aggressive but now it was soft, crushed and weak.

As the carriage drove into the yard the woman of the frail voice again addressed the man, "Oh, dear, what can be the matter? One thing she always did and that was to keep her word. She said she would come for sickness when she left and when she knew I was sick she wrote she would come and on that boat, and now she isn't here. Oh, I have suffered so much it seems as if I could not stand more."

The girl in the chair in the kitchen arose, trembling. The pallor on her face continued. The man alighted from the carriage and assisted the frail woman to the ground. She was woefully weak and emaciated and, from her rugged frame, evidently the wreck of her former self.

She walked to the step, ascended it to the kitchen threshold, opened the door, looked within and instantly put her hand to her heart. There was a deep indrawing of breath and she then exclaimed in tones that can never be reproduced: "Dunora!!!"

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

### THE GREAT PRESENCE

DUNORA'S eyes slowly grew wider than their usual wideness. She could hardly believe it. Was it true? Was that emaciated woman standing there really she? It surely was, and in verification of it Dunora exclaimed, "Mother!" And the elder woman's wealth of feeling, pent up for the years of drought, overcame her broken down resistance and, at last, the greater sentiment prevailed. She swept across the floor to the girl by the chair, threw her arms around Dunora and pressed her to her breast. And the floodgates burst. It was she whom, at last, the great sentiment had conquered.

In every life, without exception, there comes that period when the glaring attractions of lurid earth lose the sham attraction they once held and when the eternal truths come home to the inner heart. "Truth crushed to earth shall rise again." It is usually in the evening of a long life that the sombre calm precedes the Great Change, for it is a great change even though some say it is but the passing from one room into another. No mariner has ever brought back a report from that unseen haven and no earth born eye has ever measured its eternal panorama. Nature is kind when it provides a hush just preceding the ushering into the New Day.

Dunora had left her adopted mother three years before in the best of health, stout, aggressive, robust. Now she was little more than a living skeleton with hardly strength enough to stand alone. The most careless of observers would have seen that some great worry had brought her low and that the Dark Angel had singled out the hilltop home in Gardiner, Maine, for a visit. And then one of those rare occasions would come in which the front door of that home would be opened and one would emerge for the last time.

As Dunora had gazed at her only-known mother standing there framed in the door she had instantly realized the truth and immediately the two hearts met. That one appearance of her mother, that pitiful testimony to her suffering broke down all reserve and the bitterness of the past in Dunora's heart for in that weak figure standing there she read the one great word "R-e-p-e-n-t-a-n-c-e."

"Repentance," the third best attribute in our characters. The greatest is love; the next greatest is an axiom of love and is truth and the third best is regret for not acting in a truthful and loving manner and that attribute is the attribute of repentance. Repentance is the forerunner of improvement and the first step which the Almighty requires for rebirth is repentance. Without it there is no progress possible. A misstep which is not followed by repentance is surely followed by a repetition of the misstep and, as the world is organized on infallible rules which bring disaster if not followed, missteps surely spell disaster. How long we take to learn that lesson, that like breeds like; that hate breeds hate and the breeding of hate means the birth of

death—that love breeds love and the breeding of love means the birth of life.

When Dunora had left her Gardiner home three years before she had, unknowingly, carried her mother's heart with her. As the door closed with its memorable crash behind the world entering Dunora with that crash had broken some band in Mrs. Whitney's heart. Foolish, foolish pride had been the Satan produced barrier which prevented Mrs. Whitney from rising at once and calling to the poor girl going over the brow of the hill by the highland pasture.

When the shades of that first night fell with Dunora out somewhere in the cold world alone Mrs. Whitney suffered torments. Not till then did she know how dear Dunora really was to her heart, but every hour of that night she lay awake and prayed and prayed to her God that He would forgive her and put His protecting arm under the form of the lone lassie. And He, who seeth all things, answered that prayer.

Let those to whom the words of "Oh, Where is My Wandering Boy To-night," come home, try to realize Mrs. Whitney's feelings as she came at last to a knowledge of her own shortcomings and that even she with all her unwise bitter feelings could not fail to fall in love with the lovable Dunora and that she had done so. Try to think of the torture which that at last awakened woman had endured when she knew that her harshness and that of her husband had driven from the protection of home the daughter of her love.

With all the vehemence with which she had hated and abused Dunora she then came to love her. Day

after day went by and no word came from the lass who had gone over the brow of the hill by the highland pasture. Night after night drew on in their repeating blacknesses and hour after hour wore on in their interminable horror. Retribution! R-E-T-R-I-B-U-T-I-O-N!!! Retribution! Retribution! Retribution! Rang in her repentant ears. In her agony she again and again cried to God for mercy, but R-e-t-r-i-b-u-t-i-o-n! rang in her ears from the otherwise unanswering walls. No matter how much we repent an unlovely act we will not escape retribution. No matter how soon or how much hate turns to love retribution for hate will surely follow.

Her husband, not so reformed as herself, tried to influence her to forget her newly realized love; he scoffed at her, told her she was giving herself up to foolishness, advised her to bury her thoughts in her work and turn to anything but love and regret.

But the unfeeling words fell upon unhearing ears and her spoken word was all of Dunora and longing to have her return to the embraces that would then take the place of the chastisements. Day by day, as the hourly agony drew out into terrible lengths, Mrs. Whitney began to slowly fail and fade. Her weight had been excessive on the day on which Dunora had crossed the threshold but it began to lessen, lessen, lessen. Her husband saw her fade away before his eyes and at last even he grew alarmed. It began to affect him. Only one person in all the world did he really love according to his ability and that person was Mrs. Whitney. He was more dependent on her than he realized and then a

greater realization of that fact came to him than ever before in his life. His work suffered and Dunora's absence began to break down the family.

How severely Mrs. Whitney chided herself for not appreciating Dunora in those years when she had been in the home. As great as had been the lack of appreciation then, so great was the fullness of appreciation when she had gone. Love is both a creating and a destroying force. When it is rightly exercised it is creative, when it is abused it is destructive. Of all the forces of earth love is the most jealous of its rights. It will not endure the least trifling with its sacred prerogatives. Retribution and remorse are its two destructive agents and they destroy utterly unless fullhearted repentance comes and they sometimes destroy even then.

So love realized too late because previously crushed out by selfishness required a fearful retribution of Mrs. Whitney. It required the most fearful penalty it could command. It required her life itself. And because of her waning strength and the felt approach of the Dark Messenger, Dunora had been sent for because they knew she would keep her promise.

But, oh! the realization of that meeting. The breaking down of barriers and the birth of visible love. As the older woman swept the younger into her arms both burst into tears. Each put her head on the other's breast. Dunora's choked utterance, reiterated, "Mother! Mother!" and Mrs. Whitney voiced her feelings in repeated utterances of "Dunora!" "Dunora!"

After long years of a crushed girlhood, beginning when Mrs. Whitney had repulsed Dunora's infant

offer of love, Dunora at last, in that one look at the pitiful figure of the skeleton of her former robust mother, knew love of her. That sight and the tale it told brought forgiveness for all the bitter years that had gone before and Mrs. Whitney knew it. Greatly had Mrs. Whitney sinned, greatly she had paid for her sin and let it be added that any who contemplate sinning thus will as surely pay the penalty.

The two parties, Mr. and Mrs. Whitney for one and Dunora for the other, had missed each other because Dunora came up one road from the steam-boat dock while the Whitneys went down another. For two weeks Dunora remained at the Gardiner home and they were two weeks of love and care for her mother. The two were inseparable and the poor weak mother tried to make up for the years of bitterness. Dunora and she slept together and it was heart-rending to see the endeavors of Mrs. Whitney to avoid any unnecessary efforts on Dunora's part.

She would lie awake and Dunora would discover that her sleep was sham. "Mother, dear, why aren't you sleeping?" "Oh, Dunora, I was afraid you would think I might die in your arms." "Mother, if you ever say that again I will just lay you across my knee and spank you. You know I can do it too." And she smiled a wan smile as she remembered the woman who was three years before and the woman who was now. The woman who was three years before weighed over one hundred pounds more than the woman who was now. Such had been her suffering.

"You know, mother, you are so small now that I can make you mind me and you must do so. Now

you mind me and go to sleep." And the delighted Mrs. Whitney smiled and slept.

Each day was a blessing to them both. Each day was but a constant endeavor for either one or the other to try to outdo the other in deeds of kindness and little acts of consideration. It was a veritable love feast which feverishly attempted to make up for the bygone years of drought. More than once Mrs. Whitney said, "Oh, Dunora, I do not see why I never realized what a dear daughter I had with me when you were here. I cannot understand what blinded my eyes to what a dear daughter you were. How you could have lived so long with me and I never realizing your worth is hard to understand. The way I have suffered in your absence is surely proof to you of how I have come to know you as you are. Oh, Dunora, if I only could have loved you in the past as I do now I would have been such a happy woman and you would have been a happy girl. And oh, how much better I would have treated you. Every blow I ever struck you when I whipped you is now a constant blow at my heart. Every dainty I gave to my son and not to you only creates in me now a never satisfied desire. I am being dearly paid for every wrong I ever did you. Oh, that I never had needed the pay! The sight of you now and the sound of your voice is just giving me new life and strength. Oh, Dunora, I love you so now that it makes up for all the lack of love before."

The two weeks which Dunora was to stay before she went back to get Irene were golden in the extreme to the girl who had at last found love where she had for years looked for it in vain. Had she found it before, her whole life's history would have

been changed. But now she knew the necessity of her being near her mother who was so desperately ill. In order to stay longer she had to go to get Irene, and so at the end of the two weeks she prepared to take the boat to Massachusetts and her child.

As the time of parting drew near Mrs. Whitney would not let Dunora out of her sight. She hung on her every word, inflection and gesture and kissed her and kissed her and again kissed her at the door, that same door out of which the poor girl had gone under such different circumstances three years before. "I'll be back in just a very few days, mother, dear, so don't worry for soon I'll be coming up this hill again and I'll come to bring you joy. And, mother, know that your Dunora loves you deeply and forgives you for anything you may have done. I forgive you freely because you are sorry and above all because you love me at last. Oh, mother, if you only had loved me before!"

As Dunora went over the brow of Iron Mine Hill Mrs. Whitney stood in the door waving her hand. When her hand fell to her side from the waving she instantly placed it to her heart and reeled. Her husband caught her in his arms. The look on her face alarmed him and he sent at once for the doctor, but the doctor was not needed for the services of the Great Physician were all that were given at that hour. Gently they put her on her bed and she cried for "Dunora! Dunora!" The case was desperate, and, as soon as it was so realized, a messenger was hurried after the Boston bound girl to see if by any chance the departure of the boat had been delayed. But it had sailed and the messenger

returned, but not before another messenger had rapped at the door, the messenger of death. Worn down by the three years of retribution and repentance the dear woman could not endure even the temporary absence of Dunora and so Mrs. Whitney never saw Dunora reascend by the highland pasture for when Dunora returned Mrs. Whitney had been ushered into the Great Presence.

## CHAPTER NINETEEN

### THE HOUSE OF SILENCE

UNAWARE of the tragedy which had taken place in the home by the highland pasture, Dunora sailed down the blue and winding Kennebec with her thoughts centered about the mother whom at last she loved. And above the pulsing steamer on which the young mother was speeding, the bald eagle soared, the king of birds, in a setting of majestic scenery.

Unblessed by love before and stirred to her depths by its fires Mrs. Whitney had been unable to endure even a short separation from the object of her love. And the angel of death had taken that moment of lowest vitality in which to overwhelm the flickering spark of life.

Mrs. Whitney had lived a life in accordance with her belief in God. Her God was expressed in terms as told to Dunora in the days gone by when the lassie had been told that she was born to damnation and foreordained to torment because not of her foster mother's cruel belief.

Apparently the Almighty had used Dunora as the means of awakening in Mrs. Whitney a knowledge that God is really love. And the poor woman had become a martyr to that knowledge.

When they had placed the emaciated form of what

had once been the robust Mrs. Whitney in the bed from which she would never arise alive, the family gathered around her realized that her earthly career was at an end. She had no illness of the body. For three years she had been sick with no illness physicians could diagnose and beside which the ablest practitioner would have sat with folded, baffled hands. It was a disease of the heart's holy of holies which only one medicine would reach, and that medicine was in human form and was named Dunora. And Dunora even for those few days, was far away from the bonnie highland pasture and the wayside home where love dwelt.

In those sombre seasons of life when only the eternal verities have any weight there is brought to our reasoning, if unselfish, the knowledge that if a person has lived up to the light that has been given them, even though that light is much inferior to the light given others, the person so living will in no wise lose their reward. Many a saint has gone to the eternal crown in the Dark Ages when Bibles were possessed by but few and the requirements of saintship unknown. But to those to whom the requirements have been made known that much of fulfilment is required. And to those thus trying, even though the person led may not know it, the words of the entralling hymn are nevertheless true—

“He leadeth me, oh blessed thought,  
Oh words with heavenly comfort fraught,  
By waters still, o'er troubled sea,  
Still 'tis God's hand that leadeth me.”

The dear woman tossed on her bed. She moaned “Dunora! Dunora!” The tearful and helpless

watchers beheld the scene in dire distress because of their very helplessness. Husband and son, the latter owing his very life to the mother before him, were agonized, but the dear woman on the bed was not so. Again she was with the daughter she loved. She turned over in bed and folded her arms about the imaginary Dunora. And speech clear, distinct and sweet came to her. "Yes, dear," she said, "mother knows you are afraid to go out in the pasture to get the cow. It is dark—dark, but there's nothing to fear. Mother-will-go-for-you." And then came a pause. Every head in that room of those kneeling beside the martyr's bed was bowed in awe, for they knew they were in the very presence of the Great King, who with His greatness, is the tenderest of all.

The stricken woman rose to a sitting posture. She threw her arms out in a rhapsody of joy. The furrows of care and hard work fled from her brow. "Oh, Dunora," she exclaimed, "the pasture isn't dark. It is all light—and white—and beautiful—beautiful!!!" and with a great sigh of infinite relief, the realization of great joy and the entering into perfect rest the dear woman fell back upon the pillows and—overhead there was the unheard rushing of unseen wings.

So went Dunora's mother and it cannot be said that she went to other than victory. Even at that hour there was a leading.

"And when my task on earth is done,  
When by Thy grace the victory's won,  
E'en death's cold wave I will not flee,  
Since God through Jordan leadeth me."

A day after Dunora arrived in Boston came the letter bearing the news. In the parlor in Gardiner lay the mortal remains of Mrs. Whitney silently awaiting the return of Dunora and that return was made by the grief stricken girl as fast as the next train could carry her. She hired a carriage at the station and hurried the driver up Iron Mine Hill faster than he had ever driven before.

When she reached the house she entered the kitchen door and, speaking in low tones to those she saw within, passed at once to the parlor where the silent form lay. Upon what happened within that room the mantle of sacredness draws a shielding curtain. The thoughts that went through the girl's brain would have made very interesting insight into the inner recesses of the human soul under conditions very much unlike those ever met with in ordinary life. After all the years of her girlhood spent in a loveless atmosphere she had at last seen love arise triumphant in the heart which had for years denied it admittance. She had seen that love not only become an ordinary love but an overwhelming love, such a love that the absence of the object of its adoration had brought her mother down from complete health to the verge of the Valley of the Shadow and then, when Dunora was but temporarily absent, had seen her enter that Port from which no mariner returns.

For a second time Dunora had become motherless and in a year she was again to become an orphan for Mr. Whitney survived but that time. Considered from Dunora's standpoint at what worse time could Mrs. Whitney have passed away? Had she lived with her love for Dunora what a host of sun-

beams she could have put into the girl's barren life.

The death of her foster mother meant far more to Dunora than appeared on the surface. It robbed her of her right, of her inborn right, the right of every boy and every girl to a loving mother. And, deeper yet, it may be asked who causes this persistent robbing of parents from children? The same one who deceived Eve in the Garden of Eden when he said unto her "Ye shall not surely die." The whole groaning creation, waiting for deliverance from the effects of that lie, only too sadly testifies to the truth that Jehovah told and to the lie with which "the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan" deceived the mother of mankind and, through her, the world.

All these six thousand years of the Devil's deceit has the penalty of death, the penalty of that lie, been paid and the deeper meaning which Mrs. Whitney's death had for Dunora was that Satan was her own particular enemy, that he robbed her of her own dear mother and, after years of abuse when at last her foster mother was reborn by love, Satan, at the very hour when Dunora needed her foster mother most, robbed the girl of her also.

So the Adversary of all good, all happiness, all life, in his usual sneaking and dirty manner, went behind the back of this innocent sufferer and tore her heart strings to the limit of endurance. At his foul door can be laid every evil that attacked her, and many and various were the devices by which the fiend endeavored to encompass her downfall, but the devil far from knows all things, and he made a great piece of misjudgment when he put his atten-

tion on Dunora, for he tried to encompass the down-fall of

### One Wonderful Rose

and he absolutely failed.

If he failed with her he can fail with others. So take courage, tempted ones: you can win and not only win but be a hero and the winner of a crown from the hands of Him who upheld Dunora.

“ ‘Blessed is he that overcometh,’  
On the sacred page is read,  
For the crown of life He giveth  
That shall ransom from the dead.  
And the Lord of Life then trained her  
In the rough way of the cross,  
For He knew that early pleasures  
Meant, indeed, the crown’s sure loss.”

Dunora, after the funeral of her loved mother had taken place and she had seen the falling of the first night with now her two mothers beneath the sod, did not care to remain long in the Gardiner home now additionally associated with the loved and lost mother of her girlhood days. Conversation was not engaged in much above the lowest tones in the Whitney home after the funeral, and, for the day or so in which Dunora remained to assist in whatever way she could with the stricken son and husband, she was as much alone as possible.

The highland pasture and the redolent woods, the majestic hills and rolling fields called her and who can say that additional and sterling anchor-

ages to her already staunch and true character were not laid in those rambles alone with her thoughts.

Every room in the old home spoke the name of her departed mother; every board in the floor of every room cried out her name. Everywhere were the signs of her presence and the mark of the work of her dear hands. The kitchen, where for years as a faithful wife she had prepared the meals to sustain her husband in his work but brought back her form. The bedroom where she slept, the sitting room where she sewed, the dining room with floor worn by her feet all spoke of her.

But far above the speaking of those inanimate walls was the not-to-be-denied declaration of the last three years of her earthly life. Those three years of contrition crowned the years of storm which preceded with a halo of glory. The shadows of her stormy life fled away into what is always the fairest time of day, whether it be the solar day or the day of life, and that is the sunset. Then the Divine Architect in voiceless words speaks of the majesty of His love daily. As the sun proceeds on his western journey to light other lands, God paints in the evening sky a glorious, never repeating picture which staggers human imagination and baffles all human effort to in any way effectively repeat or mimic. And invariably the rays of light in the sunset sky shoot upward in the form of the diverging radii of a celestial crown.

So with Mrs. Whitney, her martyr's crown became a crown of glory lighted by all the lights and colors which glow around the sunset of a life of love. Surely, if Dunora could forgive, we should. And let us not forget that grave on the hilltop in Gar-

diner in the State of Maine where Dunora's dear mother sleeps awaiting the glad morning of earth's new birth when He who once stood at the grave of the dead Lazarus and gave life to his lifeless clay, shall again, but in far louder tones, ring forth the glad summons to the sleeping ones of earth:

“Come forth!”

## CHAPTER TWENTY

### THE WEARY ROAD CONTINUED

AS Dunora slept in that desolate room in Lynn following the eating of the two slices of bread and the part of a doughnut, Olive sat trying to devise means of easing the sad news of an empty larder and moneyless purse as well as lost situations.

Dunora shortly awoke. She was sadly in need of food and medical attendance, but where were they to come from. "Oh, Olive," she said, "I am so weak. Am I sick?" "Well, you have been having quite a sleep, and that will make you feel weak, anyway. After people sleep a long time they feel weak before they——" and here Olive caught herself just in time for she was going to say, "before they eat." So she added, "before they sleep a little more." "Oh!" exclaimed Dunora, "have I got to sleep more to feel stronger? I feel too weak to sleep or to lie awake, either. I don't know what to do." There was a momentary pause in her speech, then she added the words Olive dreaded to hear. "But I am so hungry."

Hunger unsatisfied,—the incentive to crime or the foundation to that heroic struggle without which true manhood or womanhood cannot exist. To satisfy hunger or gluttony mankind does all its crime.

A universally proportionately fed world would be a world of peace and good will to men.

Olive made no response to Dunora's half wail of hunger. She hoped she might not hear it repeated, but her hope was dashed to the ground, for right on the heels of Dunora's first declaration came its sister: "Olive, I am so hungry!"

Olive had to reply. "I haven't much here just now, dearie. If you will please eat just what I give you we will get more soon, and I think that not eating much is best for you just now. I'll give you some more good bread in thick slices, and you know bread is called the staff of life." She cut off more from the loaf and Dunora ate it with the sauce of hunger. Then came the recollection of the past act on the piazza of Irene's home.

A shade of varied feeling went over Dunora's countenance as that recollection came to her and she grew pale. "Olive," she called, "where is Irene?" Poor Olive dreaded every word that Dunora spoke. She did not know what would come next, and how to answer was a problem. When this question came she knew how to answer at once, however. She ran at once to the bed on which Dunora lay.

Falling on her knees by the bedside Olive took Dunora's poor face in her hands and kissed her forehead repeatedly. "Poor little girlie," she said, "I didn't want you to ask me that question. I hoped you would think of something else. But I shall not try to tell anything but truth, and that is best for you to hear. I do not know where she is, but I know surely that she is safe. No harm will come to her, dear, and so you just be a heroine and bite your lip and know that the one who has done

this cowardly deed will be paid for it in full payment and that for every coward's act he has done to you he will be repaid fourfold."

"Give me my clothes!" demanded Dunora. Olive looked astonished at the girl and made no effort to rise. "Give me my clothes!" again demanded Dunora. Olive did so as Dunora arose. "What are you going to do?" queried Olive. Dunora gave her a look which Olive never understood because she had never been a mother. But before that look she quailed, she knew not why. Before that look she dared not speak.

Dunora arose unsteadily and clothed herself, Olive assisting her. There was not a word interchanged between them. Dunora had a look of determination on her face which disturbed Olive. Olive went toward the door. As soon as Dunora had fully dressed she went toward the door. Olive stood in her way and spread her arms across the closed exit. "Stand aside!" demanded the little mother. "Stand aside, Olive!" But in Olive there was the blood of wisdom also.

She looked directly into Dunora's flashing eyes. "Dunora, dear," she said sweetly, "please calm yourself. You know I will do anything I can for you, and you know I will not ask you to do anything I do not know is for your interest. Dunora, don't go through this door. I am here. I am your friend. Outside is danger for you now and no good." "But I want Irene; I want Irene!" cried the distracted girl. "Dunora, dear, I repeat that I don't know where Irene is, but I know she is all right. You must try to control yourself. This inhuman act will do no good to the one who did it, but it will

end in much greater happiness for you. But be brave, my dear, be brave. I've known you long enough to know that you have it in you, and now show it!"

The head of the poor Dunora went low. "Oh, Olive, how can I be brave in the face of Irene's being taken away? How can I be brave when all my being calls out for her? I am her mother! Is there no punishment for the man who wins the confidence of an innocent girl only to break her heart? Is it she who is to bear the punishment for being innocent? Is innocence a crime to be punished?"

Olive put her hands on Dunora's shoulder. "Go back and lie down, dear," she said. "We must think some way out of this. We can't do anything now but just think a way out." She hesitated a moment then thought that by giving Dunora something else to think about the thought of Irene would be pushed from her mind.

"Dunora, you have been very ill. You have been in that bed—three weeks!" She waited to see the effect of her words, and the effect was what she expected. "Three weeks! Three weeks in this bed!" "Yes." "I have been in this bed three weeks and have known nothing about it!" "Yes, dear." Dunora looked aghast. "Why, Olive, I have never doubted you before, but surely you must be mistaken when you say that I have been here three weeks. You must be mistaken." "Dunora, I wish it was true that I was mistaken, but it is only too true. You had suffered so that the cruel blow that was struck you caused you to lose consciousness, and you have been unconscious for every day of that three weeks." "Olive!" was all she could exclaim.

"So you see, dear," and here she came to the subject which she hoped would occupy chief place in Dunora's mind, "we have both lost our situations, for, of course, they couldn't hold them open for us all that time." "Why, Olive, why did you lose your situation? You didn't need to do it. You could have worked. You were not sick." "No, I couldn't work. Do you suppose I would have left you?" Dunora smiled wanly. "No, Olive; I know you wouldn't desert me."

"Well, my dear, because we have lost our situations we have also lost most of our money, and that is why I gave you doughnuts and bread. That's all we have." Dunora even that early in life was developing a character of independence. It became a buttress of her salvation. In such a young girl what she did at that time was remarkable. Most girls would have been prostrated with the weight of sorrow which Dunora already upheld, to say nothing of this additional burden, but Dunora was not of that kind. She got right out of bed.

"Olive, how much money have you got?" "Oh, I have some," was the reply, for she intended evasion, not daring to tell the absolute truth. "Well take one cent and go out and get a newspaper and we will see if we can find an advertisement we can answer." Olive arose and went out. In a short time she returned with a paper. Together they scanned the "Help Wanted" column.

"Here it is!" exclaimed the delighted Dunora. Both pair of eyes glued themselves to the printing, and both pairs of eyes saw the following: "Wanted—a seamstress not afraid of work. Dressmaking will be taught the applicant who is hired."

"Hurrah!" almost shouted Dunora. "Here we have it! Work, hard work. I must have it! I must have it! I must have it or I'll just break! Now, I'll run right to the address and try hard to get the work." She went toward the door, but Olive seized her coat and held her back. "You need something more to eat before you go," she said. "Oh, I can't! I can't!" cried Dunora, as she went through the door and hurried down to the street.

In passing let us look at the figure of the girl as she went down the stairs and emerged onto School Street. Her coat was the epitome of neatness and the personification of economy. What would have been rags on another were most carefully sewed rags in Dunora's clothes, but the long wear on the coat could not be concealed. Her shoes were so worn that the holes through the bottoms of each sole were covered with cardboard. Her other clothes were similarly worn.

Onto Union Street and toward the east she turned and hastened to the door of the house, the number of which had been given in the paper. A very pleasant lady opened the door in response to Dunora's ring. "Please, madam, I saw in the paper that you wanted a seamstress who was not afraid of work. I have taken lessons in dressmaking and I'm not at all afraid of work, and I do need money. Please, may I have the position?"

Over the face of the good lady there came a puzzled and then a pained expression. She looked at Dunora kindly and saw too plainly the girl's need. Then she spoke words which evidently pained her. "My dear, just a moment before you came I hired another girl for the position."

No money, no food, no work! Dunora turned sadly from the door without a word and slowly wended her unsteady way back to the room and Olive. As she entered Olive knew the result of her trip before she told it, but she said: "Position's gone!" Olive was not blessed with beauty of face, but she was with beauty of character, and she wouldn't know defeat. "Well, dear, we didn't look at all the advertisements. Let's take the paper and look for some more help wanted." So they took up the paper and looked all through the column. There was nothing in the column which met their requirements. Olive at last was discouraged. For a moment she sat in dumb despair.

Suddenly there was the sound of footsteps on the stairs, and a knock came at the door. Olive opened it. A young woman stood there. "Does the young lady who applied at Mrs. Randolph's for a position as seamstress live here?" "Yes indeed!" exclaimed the radiant Olive, delighted she knew not why. Dunora advanced to the young lady and said: "I am the one who wanted the position." The stranger smiled. "Mrs. Randolph sent me to follow you and I almost lost your way. She wants me to ask you to come back to see her." "Do you know why?" Dunora asked. "Yes, I know why, but I prefer that she should tell you."

Together they went down the stairs and onto the street, and together they threaded their way through the idle crowds toward the quieter street on which Mrs. Randolph lived. The usual bums ogled them from the street corners. When they arrived at the house they were ushered within by the good lady, who at once took Dunora into the parlor. "My

dear," she said, "I took a liking to you at once when you came here a short time ago. I told you the truth when I said that I had hired another girl just before you came, but I have discharged her, for I want you, for I know you will be the best girl for the place. Now, my dear, I am going to hire you, and so you stay right here and go to work."

"Oh, I am so glad! We did need it." This latter was spoken before she thought.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

### TRIALS

NOW the first thing I'll ask you to do for me is to go downtown and do some shopping for me. I'll give you the directions and the money, and I am sure you can do as I ask." The good lady then gave her twenty-five dollars in cash together with the directions, and Dunora went out onto the street the possessor of twenty-five dollars and a hunger developed by two days' diet on five cents' worth of doughnuts.

Oh, if she had only known what Dunora had just passed through and also the terrible pangs of hunger that gnawed at her vitals and said to her repeatedly: "Take just five cents! It's worth more than that to do this errand. Take a quarter, for she'll give you more than that when you get back, and you have a right to it now. You are starving and self-preservation is the first law of nature. Just tell her the truth, tell her you haven't eaten anything for two days but three doughnuts." She held the twenty-five dollars up in her hand. The amount had been given her in one dollar bills and it looked a mountain of money to that country-bred girl not far from out of her teens. She went behind a building and then counted the whole twenty-five bills, one at a time—one—two—three—four—five—six—

seven, and so on till the number reached twenty-one—twenty-two—twenty-three—twenty-four—twenty-five. And that was a very big number of single units for her. And twenty-five dollars was the largest sum of money she had held in her hand to that time.

“Oh, be sensible; you’re starving. Self-defence is the first thing to consider. Take just one dollar, she’ll never miss one dollar out of all that pile. She will not count the change, perhaps, anyway. Take a chance. She was a brute to send you downtown with all that money when you had had an empty stomach. You have a right to it.” Then as the girl still held the money close the Tempter continued. “Borrow some. Tell her how hungry you are and that you’ll pay back the money.” Ah, how real and wrenching these temptations were. Then came a final one. “Take the whole twenty-five dollars and hide it and tell her that you lost it.” So Satan uses his wiles, but they were in vain against this heroic girl. She stood these tests and returned with the goods desired and the exact change. Mrs. Randolph expressed no surprise that she returned with the money intact.

Mrs. Randolph continued: “Here are ten cents which you spent for carfare.” Dunora was stupefied. It was three days till pay day and that ten cents represented all the two girls would have till Saturday night for food. It was fairly late in the day when this occurred, and Dunora made no comment, but went to work with an empty stomach and aching heart.

At the day’s close Dunora sallied forth on her hungry road. She reached the room and Olive was

awaiting her. "I got the place," was all she said at first, and Olive could get no other word out of her till she was ready to speak further. Then she simply put the ten cents on the bed with the laconic remark: "That is all the money we have for food till Saturday night." Olive grew curious, naturally. "What do you mean by saying you got the position and then have so little money?" "The lady hired me because she had discharged the other girl. The first thing she did was to put twenty-five dollars in real bills in my hand and sent me down to do some shopping for her. I walked to save carfare because I didn't have it, and when I got back she gave me this ten cents which she supposed I had spent for carfare. That is all we have till I get my pay Saturday night."

"That isn't very encouraging in the food line, is it?" "No, it isn't, but I have work, and that is almost everything. We only have to wait till Saturday, and then we can at least get a good meal." "Oh, but till Saturday night what shall we do?" at length wailed Olive. "We will make what we can get with ten cents do," was the instant reply. "What can we get with it?" "I know, but there is no use getting any till morning. We will have to go to bed without anything tonight, but we can eat in the morning." Olive at once said, "We have something. I have one slice of bread which I have hoarded. Let's divide." They did, and then went to bed, each with the half slice of bread in lieu of a repast.

In the morning Dunora took Olive by the hand and together they went to a bakery. Dunora bought five cents worth of raised doughnuts, which appealed to her because of size. The two girls lived on these

doughnuts for a day and a half. In the meantime Dunora worked all day at sewing. Friday noon the remaining five cents were spent for more raised doughnuts, and these were all they ate till Dunora's salary came Saturday afternoon. As she had only worked half a week, she received but half the weekly salary, three dollars. This then was their total sum on which to maintain themselves for the coming week unless something unforeseen happened, and that something didn't happen.

That very Saturday, however, Olive secured work in a shoe factory. Nevertheless, the three dollars had to suffice till pay day at the end of the week. Suppose, reader, your income limited to three dollars for a week, which money you divided with another and out of your dollar and a half provided every need of life. And this, too, when at least Olive knew that on nearly every street corner lurked a human dog who would provide a good meal for the dog's price.

Behind the darkest cloud the sun shines, and it shone behind the cloud of Dunora's experiences at that time. One day in that week of hunger there came a letter to Dunora in an unknown handwriting. With curious fingers she opened it and read these words:

“EVERETT, MASS.,

—, 19—

“Dear Dunora—

“You may never have heard of me, but I have heard of you, and I have found where you are. I am your aunt, and I am lonely and I want you to come over to see me.

“Lovingly,

“AUNT JUNE.”

Dunora had never heard of her, but she went to see her that evening and spent ten precious cents to get there. She found the address and saw that it was a house of more than the ordinary pretence, and also one that was of the more expensive kind. With much curiosity she rang the bell. Who has not experienced that tremor of feeling as they have gone to a strange house in answer to an invitation and have rung the bell and waited for the first sound within? Who shall it be who comes to the door? What will be your impression and what will be theirs?

There was a sound within and soon the door opened and a woman stood before her, small, slight, not easy to read. "Is this Aunt June?" queried the girl. "Why, Dunora, I hadn't an idea you would be so handsome! Come right in! I'm just as glad to see you as I can be. Why, you know I heard of you by accident, and I heard you were in trouble, and I said to myself that I had a big home here and lived in it all by myself and it would be a great pleasure to me to have a young girl with me, and most of all, you. And so I didn't say a word to any one, but I just had found out your address and I wrote you the letter I am very glad you received." And she went on in her torrent of words with hardly a breath between, and not giving Dunora an opportunity to make any remark of her own. "Are you hungry? Of course you are. How foolish of me to ask that question. I rather felt that you would come to-night in answer to my letter, and I had a hot supper all prepared for you, and if you'll follow me to the dining room we will eat."

Here, as her Aunt arose to go to the dining room,

Dunora had her first chance to speak. "Aunt June," she said, "I cannot eat with you unless you will do something else for me. I came from a room where I have a room-mate, Olive. She has not had a very good time, and she has been very, very good to me. She is hungry and hasn't had anything to eat but a couple of doughnuts for quite a time. I couldn't possibly eat and let her go hungry. If you will put up for her a dinner just like the one you put up for me why then I'll eat mine."

"Well, you are a generous girl!" exclaimed the aunt. "Of course I will." "You don't call that being generous do you? I don't. I call it just plain duty. I'd be very, very bad if I didn't do it. Olive watched by my bedside for three whole weeks when I didn't know a thing. She shared with me everything she had; she gave me money in buying food when I was unconscious, and she gave me good advice from her very heart, and I'd be the most ungrateful person living if I didn't do all I could for her. She has work next week, or I wouldn't even stop here now to eat this dinner."

"Dunora, you certainly are an unusual girl. Let us go to dinner now, and we will talk later." As Dunora sat in the parlor as they were talking she noticed the elaborate furnishings there. The dining room was as elegantly furnished, and all of that home which she had seen was but the actual reality of her long continued dreams. And to her thoughts came: "Oh, if I could only live in a house like this."

What a repast was put before the famished girl. Onto the table were brought roast beef, squash, turnip, parsnip, potatoes, spinach, salad, and for dessert, plum pudding. Although in the last stages of

hunger Dunora controlled herself and ate like a lady, a habit which always distinguished her. Her aunt remarked it. "Dunora, where did you get your beautiful table manners?" "By watching other people and using my common sense and doing only those acts at the table which I thought would offend people the least." "Certainly an unusual girl," repeated the aunt.

At the close of the meal Aunt June said, "Now, Dunora, as I said when you first came, I am all alone here and want you to come and live with me and you can do work enough around the house to be at ease in your mind about staying here. You will come, I am sure, for I want your companionship. Will you come?"

"Why surely, Aunt June. But first let us put up Olive's meal, for I cannot keep that poor dear waiting longer. I'll get my things and come back to-morrow. I hope you will like me and that I will like you." Shortly they were putting the final touches to Olive's dinner, and Dunora's Aunt gave her a little bag in which to take it over to Olive. Then she went to the room where Olive awaited.

The news of the coming change was sad news to Olive, for it meant that they must seek separate ways, and Olive had grown to be very fond of Dunora. But Olive had a good situation in the shoe factory, and Dunora had what looked to be a home. The dinner made that evening more than pleasant.

The next day, according to her promise, Dunora came back to Everett and to her Aunt June's. It seemed more like a dream than a reality to the girl.

Aunt June came to the door quickly and smiled at the small amount of clothes Dunora brought in the bag which had been loaned her the day before. "You seem just like a sunbeam coming into the house, Dunora. This house has been cloudy with loneliness for a long, long time, and you are very welcome. Come up and let me show you your room." Dunora followed up the velvety stairs to the second story, where, in the front of the house on the tree-shaded street, was a large room with pleasant bay window. It was very appealingly furnished. "This is our guest chamber and it is to be yours. But you know you are not a guest here, but just belong here."

"Oh, Aunt June, I just can't understand it all. I just can't understand why all this good fortune came to me just now when I needed it most. I can't help thinking of the contrast between this and what I just came from in Lynn. I don't know why I deserve it or how you heard of me or why you asked me here when you found out where I was."

"Oh," laughed Aunt June, "I not only found out where you were, but I saw you before you came here. I liked your looks very much."

"But it all seems so strange to me." "Don't let it seem strange. It's natural enough. As I said, you can busy yourself around the house enough to keep your mind occupied. Then you can read, and when you feel tired of that we will go into Boston to the theater."

"Oh, Aunt June, you are planning only for my happiness, and you mustn't do that. I hope I am not selfish and I couldn't be happy unless I was

doing something for you, too." "You'll find enough to do for me from time to time. Don't worry about that."

Content with the assurance of that, Dunora soon made herself at home in her strange new dwelling place, which she could not quite understand. She endeavored to keep herself as much in the background as possible and not to intrude herself upon her new-found aunt any more than possible.

But her aunt didn't seem to easily be denied Dunora's presence. When the girl was alone in her room for any length of time, invariably Aunt June wandered up the stairs and found an excuse for entering. On these occasions she usually sat up very close to the girl. Down in the parlor where Dunora would sit in order to indulge in her dreams of joy, Aunt June would follow her also and sit down beside her and cuddle up close.

"Oh, you are so beautiful," she would say. "I just love to be near you." Dunora couldn't quite understand her, and waited to see more of what her aunt would do. But the days went on as merry as could be, and the previously starved girl grew full fleshed and strong under the influence of the abundant and regular food.

After she had been there several weeks Aunt June came to her one day and said: "Do you know, dear, I have gotten into a bad habit recently. I am not sleeping well. I get to thinking of you and get lonely. Sometimes I have been tempted in the middle of the night to crawl in beside you, for I know that if I could only be beside you I could sleep. Would you care very much if I did?"

"Why, Aunt June," instantly replied the lass, "if

you ever feel that way, and that you could sleep better by coming in with me, why do so." "Thank you!" said Aunt June, and did not speak further of it. They both went to the theaters in Boston frequently. In the times in which Aunt June came to bed with her she talked confidentially. Finally she grew very confidential and, in her own words, one night told Dunora—that she had a man visitor at night when Dunora was asleep.

Dunora had noticed a piece from a man's attire in the lower hall once and had wondered. But her aunt's statement was the most amazing she had heard. It was the last thing she ever would have thought of with relation to her aunt. Dunora was so wonderstruck at the time the subject was mentioned that she made no answer to the words. In fact what answer could she make?

But soon the matter came to a climax. A day or two later Aunt June met Dunora in the parlor. She came and sat beside the girl. "Oh, I'm glad to see you. Hope you are feeling well. I want to talk to you." She moved up close to Dunora and spoke softly. "Do you know I'm really getting jealous of you. My friend was speaking of you last night and he said he had a man friend who had seen you and was very much smitten with you. What do you think of that?"

Dunora's answer was quick and to the point. "I don't think much of it if he is a friend of the man who comes here to see you, Aunt June." Aunt June didn't expect that answer, but Dunora was always doing the unexpected to those who tried to find wrong in her. Aunt June overlooked the slur and tried to calm the rising waters.

"Dunora, you foolish little girl, you are too good. This man I mentioned is influential and can do a lot for you, and he is so smitten with you that he simply wants to come to see you as my friend comes to see me."

Dunora had arisen as her aunt spoke, and the rising fire shone in her eyes. "Stop right there, Aunt June! Now I know why you have been so good to me. I knew it was a dream!—hollow! hollow! I couldn't understand what you did for me! Now I do! You tried to oil the way for this dirty work, but you didn't succeed! You say your man is influential and that I am too good. All such men are influential among their kind, which is the lowest on earth. Oh, they care for the women, they do! I've met a number of them, and they're all alike! You see them ogling girls on every corner, forgetting that a girl gave them life. They never think high as any one's head, and they live like so much human rot and die forgotten, and the only good they ever do is to die and rot into fertilizer! I am too good, am I? Yes, I am. I am too good for association with worse than brutes! And I'm too good to stay in this house any longer! I'm too good for you, and you know it! I've long suspected you and now I've found you out! I'll run upstairs and get my things and leave this fine house with covering of filth, and I'll go back to my bare rooms again with joy and oh, I'm just ashamed of you. I'm ashamed of you! Don't you ever tell any one that you're my aunt, for you're not! Thank God there isn't a drop of blood relation between us! You're not my aunt. You are only so by adoption, thank God for that!"

And she flung out of the room, tore upstairs to her room and gathered her things together and went without another word. Where are there other girls who would accept the coldness of the world under such circumstances instead of a home with all the comforts if a moral lassitude were indulged in at times. God grant the number of such to increase in leaps and bounds. Moral heroism is as far above physical heroism as the east is removed from the west.

Alone Dunora found a place in a hairdresser's. Here her pleasant ways, in spite of her heart breaking for a knowledge of the whereabouts of her child, won many new customers for her employer. The lady who employed her was a true friend, and the poor girl at last tasted more of the milk of human kindness of which she was sorely in need. In this hairdresser's shop she felt the satisfaction of work well done, and its reward, and all went as pleasant as a rosy day until the hairdresser made up her mind to move to another town, and Dunora was again thrown out of work, but with a trifle of money saved and a heart more rejuvenated.

She made some nice girl friends about this time, and for the few days she was out of work she was accustomed to walk around with one of them trying to find other work and looking in store windows to see the goods displayed and wondering how it would seem to really have money enough to own them themselves. And looking at the passing automobiles they wondered how it would seem to really ride in one. While they were looking at them passing two well-dressed men drew up to the curb in one in front of them.

"Excuse us, please, but do you know a couple of girls who want work? We are looking for two to work in our store, and we thought you might know the girls we wanted." There was hesitation on the part of the girls for a moment, then one of them replied. "We are looking for work ourselves." "Is that so!" said the spokesman of the two men. "Perhaps you'll be the very girls we want. Our store is in Reading. Jump into the auto and we'll take you over to the store and you can see if you like it."

Here were their hopes realized at last! Here was their chance to get a ride in a real automobile, and here was the chance to get work. Without further thought they hastened through the open door of the touring car. Swiftly through the streets of Lynn the car carried them, and soon they were going on the Newburyport turnpike speeding toward Salem. The two men kept their own council and talked almost entirely to themselves. The girls were too much occupied with their own thoughts and their own excitement over the prospect of work to pay much attention to the men. Furthermore, not knowing the men they were reluctant to speak to them at all.

Through Town House Square, Salem, they passed, and out toward the Danvers hills by estuaries of old ocean and dells of terrestrial nature. Then they branched off in the direction of Reading, and the farms grew larger and larger and houses fewer and fewer. Copses of woodland came at frequent intervals, and then larger stretches of forest. The rolling hills came more frequently and larger, and though in Essex County, Massachusetts, which is the most thickly populated county in the sixth State in

population in the Union, they soon came to such a long stretch of woodland that even from a hilltop which they reached no human habitation could be seen as far as the eye had unobstructed vision.

Here on a sudden, the men stopped the automobile and at once they came round to the side of the car, opened the door and one of them said: "Let's get out here a while." The girls, having no reason for distrust, stepped out. As soon as they did so the men stepped right to them, smiled with the knowing smile of those who have accomplished some evil design, and said: "Now we've got you where we want you! You don't get back from here till we get our satisfaction! There's no one near here to help you so you might as well make the best of it and"—they didn't get any farther than that with Dunora. The other girl began to beg but Dunora struck her on the back, said: "Brace up!" and turned to the men with, "So, you dirty cowards, that's the way you help girls to get work is it? You skunks, you think you'll get the better of us, do you? I've got the number of your car and so don't you lay a finger on us or you'll hear from it in two ways you don't expect!" She pulled a huge hatpin from her hat, held it as an offensive weapon and said: "You touch one of us and I'll drive this into you!"

One of the men then said: "All right! We will drive on and leave you here and you can find your way back the best way you can." No word was spoken by Dunora in reply. But in an instant there was a quick motion on her part, an upraised arm which then swept downward rapidly, and its downward sweep was followed by a loud report and the hiss of escaping air. In that instant she had stabbed

her heavy hat pin through the side of the rear tire and it had blown out. "Now I think you'll take us back," was all Dunora said.

"By God!" exclaimed the ringleader, "now see what you've done!" "And you see it, too!" declared Dunora. "And you also see that you will not go off and leave us here. You can't move a yard till you get help, and we two girls will wait here and see that the automobile doesn't run away while you two men walk back over the road to get something to mend the hole in your tire."

The men changed front at this. The one who appeared the more talkative of the two laughed with a better laugh than he had indulged in that day. He spoke to Dunora and paid no attention to the other girl. "My girl," said he, "I am very glad to meet a self-respecting woman. I have been a dog and you have behaved like a true woman that you are. It may be quite a time before we can fix this, but when it is fixed we will gladly give you a ride back to Lynn." And they did. And those two men thought differently of women after that ride to the lonely woods near Reading.

And Dunora was again out of work. When penniless she was obliged to go without food, but upon her buying some meals in a Chinese restaurant one of the Chinese proprietors observed her. This Chinaman was a father and had a little daughter to whom the heart-hungry Dunora took a fancy. The wily Oriental surmised that Dunora was not overburdened with money, and he told her she could be trusted for any meals when she needed them and was out of funds. She, thinking it the kindness any American

gentleman would extend to a refined woman in need, accepted the offer in that spirit. Once or twice she permitted the trust to be extended, but paid the bills upon coming into funds again. She noticed the Chinese father seemed to stay around on the occasions when she came in, but suspected nothing.

One day she came in late to dinner when there was no one else eating in any of the booths so prevalent in Chinese restaurants. After she had eaten part of her meal the Chinaman came into the booth and sat down opposite her. He smiled his oily, meaningless smile. Lifting up his finger he showed a ring he had which he, like the rest of his race, had gotten by living on the lowest and cheapest form of food, and in the lowest and cheapest way. "You like rings?" he asked. "All girls like rings," was the reply. "I want to give you a ring," was the astonishing rejoinder. "What do you mean?" asked the nonplussed girl. The Chinaman leaned across the table and lowered his voice. "I got a big diamond ring, a great big diamond ring, worth much. I give it to you if you stay with me one night."

The expressionless face of the Oriental showed nothing but its usual stolid sensuality. Dunora arose and looked him in the face with a look no American would have cared to have faced. "So that is why you gave me credit for my meals, is it? That is what you thought of my character. You thought you could buy my soul with a diamond ring? I suppose your race thinks that money is all there is in the world and that you can buy anything with it. But, you cur, you can't buy womanhood, and if I ever hear of your saying anything like this to any

other decent woman I'll report you to those who know what to do to such as you. Go to your Chinese wife, you Chinese beast!" And she walked out.

At about this time Dunora experienced a time of great financial stress again. She was obliged to move from even her very poor room to one that cost even less. But she faced the situation bravely and did not murmur when money grew scanty and, even with her fastidious nature she was obliged to go into ill-kept quarters.

But when she did so she didn't realize what she was entering. She had made the acquaintance of a girl about whom she knew little, and this girl told her of a house where she could get a room at a figure which was very reasonable.

Dunora found other girls there, and soon noticed the roughness of their talk. But she did not at first find out their character, as she was outdoors all day looking for work, and at night, completely exhausted, she went to her room and almost at once to sleep. The girls began dropping into her room and, out of the fellow feeling in their hearts, they gave her some food.

Soon she found them to be girls whom the lust of men had condemned to the streets. They tempted her to become one of them. They promised her food and clothes. Her answer was to leave the place without money. A merciful providence assisted her in finding work that day.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

### HER FIRST HOME

MONTHS passed in which Dunora drowned her thoughts as much as possible in work or in seeking it when a situation in which she was employed ceased offering employment. But all the time there was gnawing at her heart the mother's yearnings for her child. Exercise sufficient mentality to imagine, as near as you can if you are a woman what you would have felt under circumstances like those narrated if you had been robbed of your only child in such a fashion and knew not where she was or whether the child of your flesh was dead or alive, as weary month followed weary month. Think over those three weeks, twenty-one days of unconsciousness after Dunora fell prone at the door where the landlady told her the words she spoke.

It would seem that at this time it was decreed that she had suffered enough of roofless days and nights and periods of starvation. She made many girl friends and, necessarily, some men friends. One day while she was in a room with a few of her girl friends a man, many years her senior, was there calling. Dunora's frank face always attracted attention. This man, whose head was quite gray and very bald on top had lost his wife and was living an aimless existence on an income partly in-

herited and partly coming from other sources then unknown save to himself and those immediately concerned in its acquisition. Dunora and her unusual ways aroused his curiosity and interest, and he made inquiry concerning her from some of the people in the room.

There was considerable harmless hilarity there, and in the course of it this man came to be introduced, and then talked with her. He told her that he had furniture in storage with which he had furnished an apartment when he had a wife. He added that he had been seeking a chance to have some one keep house for him again, as he was dissatisfied with living in the way in which he was and if she would be his housekeeper he would give her a home and food and a fixed salary. He added that he was so much older than she that it would be all right to make such an arrangement. Dunora said: "What you are asking is most unusual. I do not know about you or how much I could trust you if I did as you suggest. I am very fond of cooking but I have a matter on my mind which would make me unfit to do my best." The man replied that he had enquired about her and had found out about the loss of her daughter, and that if she would keep house for him he would assist her in finding Irene.

To the heartbroken mother there was only one sacrifice she would not make to accomplish the finding of Irene. And when the possibility of finding her came in such pleasant guise it made the offer more than appealing. But she told the man whose name was Walter Burrill, that she could not decide at that time.

She thought it all out and came to the conclusion

that she would accept the situation until she found she couldn't trust him, so she told him, the following day, that she would accept the position. Accordingly he sent her to hunt a flat, and she found one to his liking and the furniture was moved in. The arrangement was purely of business, he furnished the flat and food in the rough and she, with her really great ability in that direction, cooked and made the flat a home. They had practically nothing to do with each other except in this business way, he going his way and she hers. And so although under the same roof neither knew when the other went out or when either one was out the other did not know when the outsider was to be expected. Their friends were totally different, their ways totally different, their ages totally different, but Dunora had a home where, for a time, her reserve was respected and she was not interfered with in her privacy. But that did not last. Burrill had a past with which Dunora was not acquainted when the arrangement was made. It began to crop out. One day he came home intoxicated, but Dunora had been prepared by previous developments, and it was not the shock to her that it might otherwise have been. But it drew her farther and farther away from any association with him except of purely business nature. They were living in Everett then, in an apartment house where lived many families. One poor woman, sick and abused by her husband, saw Dunora's predicament and was truly a friend in need. Worse and worse grew Burrill's periods of intoxication, and Dunora kept out of the flat at one or another of her girl friends for even days at a time when he was away with convivial friends. At this time he began to

make advances toward her of an amatory nature. These, inasmuch as they were not rough, were turned aside in a ladylike manner by Dunora.

So it continued for quite a time, and Dunora saw a disruption inevitable. Think over the predicament of the girl at this time. A home had been offered her and protection. It was heaven to find a roof over her head. She had behaved herself as a lady. The most blameworthy act she had ever done was an occasional exhibition of righteous temper, and she had protected him in more than one way and often. Then the roof was falling through no fault of hers, and the arrangement ended as will be seen shortly.

Just at this time of especial trial and especial need Vir Noble appeared on the scene. The re-meeting in Scollay Square, Boston, has already been recounted, and the increasing thrills as, at frequent intervals, Dunora blessed Vir with her presence. Between periods of time preceding this occurrence, the child marriage of Dunora had been annulled. At this time Vir knew not of any of the circumstances of this.

As that meeting took place in Scollay Square truly

The soul within him leaped forth  
To its mate, though he knew not  
That the girl of girls then stood there  
Led by God unto that spot.  
Yet there stirred within his heart's core  
Impulses not felt before,  
And the strongest heartfelt yearning  
Made him long to know her more.

During the time in which Dunora had been continuing the arrangement with Burrill she had, because of his growing intoxication, come to the point of breaking though she had done her best to try to break him of his dissoluteness. At every possible occasion Vir tried to be with her, and meeting her became of the first importance in his mind.

One evening, after one of their dinners together, he again asked her if he might not see her to her suburban home. "Not to-night, Mr. Burrill may be home and I do not want him to see you just now. I may need you later." "I may need you later"—it rang in Vir's ears like celestial music. It was the very first time that this girl of girls had ever expressed the least dependence on him and no strong man can harden his heart to the dependence of a woman. It is one of the sweet things of earth. Vir's blood surged through his veins. She dependent for the least thing on him! Glorious! Glorious! But, oh, how he longed to go to her home with her. He knew, he doubly knew, that the frail body was carrying a burden of which her lips did not speak. His heart went out to her without a thought of himself, for he utterly yearned to put his arm of protection around her in a literal as well as a figurative sense. Why should she be called upon to carry this burden alone? She was in an extremely nervous state, and at times when she was standing still he beheld her hand shake like a leaf for long periods of time. Only a great nervous strain could account for that, and Vir longed to know its cause and assist in the cure.

When Dunora told him he might not see her to her house that evening but that she might need him later, he swallowed a great lump of chagrin and

swelled with the joy of being of possible assistance. So with great reluctance he made no direct reply to her statement, but he pressed the question of coming out to see her home as soon as possible. Dunora hesitated a moment and then said, "I will do this. We will go to supper again to-morrow night and after supper you may go out with me as far as my house and, if Burrill is not there, you may come in."

Vir had to exercise an appreciable amount of self-restraint not to say something about this Burrill. He knew enough of men of the world and especially of such as had a reputation akin to Burrill's to know that no good would come of a continuance of the Burrill arrangement, yet he respected Dunora to the extent that he waited for her to say something before he added his thoughts.

The next evening after their supper Vir enjoyed the rapture of assisting her to the car in the subway at Scollay Square. On the hour's ride to the suburb where her house was situated they spoke in low tones, and she gave him one of her first confidences. "I have had trouble with Mr. Burrill, serious trouble, and I have ordered him out of my house." Vir almost forgot himself so that he nearly shouted, "Hurrah!" But he restrained his joy to subdued tones. The girl continued. "As you know, I bought the house only about a month ago, and he has been renting it from me. In this way I have an income from it, but income or no income, I have suffered all I shall at his hands, and I have given him notice to go." Here Vir interrupted. "Why don't you order him out right off? It is your house." "I cannot, for he has paid in advance, and he has two weeks more, but if he doesn't go then I

shall take means to force him out." The determination with which she spoke those words showed full well the firmness of the purpose behind them. Vir looked at her with silent admiration. To break through that independence and become depended on by Dunora was a prize worthy the mightiest of struggles. And again Vir gritted his teeth for the fight for her love. Again and again Vir saw that his own years of bitterness could be crowned with God's greatest earthly gift if he could only win Dunora's love. Ah, but it was not his for the asking. Only could he win it by a long process during which he must show himself not only a man but one exhibiting qualities of manhood coming up to Dunora's standard which was made unusually high because of her previous association with the hard and cruel things of life.

They came to the suburb where was Dunora's house. Alighting from the car which did not go within sight of her home, they walked till she said: "We will come in sight of my bungalow as soon as we pass this next house. Then we can see if Bur-rill is there." They passed the house mentioned and across the field, and over near some open woods stood a house which Vir could only indistinctly see because of the lateness of the hour. In the upper rear windows a light shone. A man's head appeared in one of the two windows. "There he is looking for me. I'll run across the field and I'll see you in about ten minutes right here. I'll feed my dog and then come back, and I'll spend the night at my girl friend's house. You can go with me to her door. She lives in Everett."

Into the darkness of the field he saw the form so

dear to him go. Around the corner of the bungalow he saw her turn as she came into the light reflected from the upstairs window. Then he heard the heavy door shut and with it felt a pain in his heart. The moments during which she was within the house were hours to Vir. But at length, after he had seen the lights flash on downstairs, he heard the door reopen and saw her come toward him around the bungalow's corner and disappear again into the intervening darkness. As out of the darkness of his bitter life the sunbeam of Dunora had come, so out of the darkness which then intervened the dear Dunora was to burst.

As she came into the light up the little hillock his face beamed with joy, and he exclaimed: "Oh, I'm so glad to see you. It seemed a year that you were in that house." "Did it?" enquired the girl as if she didn't know. Together they took the car for Malden, and in Malden Square changed cars for Everett. There was an intangible something existing then between them which drew them nearer together. It was both her need and his need. Their conversation was on pleasant subjects, and even laughter came. Dearly did he like to see it on her lips. They came to the street near Everett Square where her friend lived, and passed down it to the little cottage house. The friend came to the door and all three stood there and talked. It was an hour of great pleasure to Vir. Finally Dunora's friend passed within and Dunora and Vir stood close together by the little cottage door. "Well, I must go within," she said. But she didn't move. A look came over her face he had not seen before, but he read a new passage in his life. Oh, but the glow of ripening love, the gleam

of heart warmth, the heat of the fire of Cupid's passion which raged through him!

Softly he tiptoed from that little yard, and as he stood in the gateway he turned and looked back at the cottage which contained the form of her so dear to him. The four walls spoke not, yet within them was life to him. As he turned down the street he strode a better man with a higher purpose and a newer resolve to conquer in order to win her and, above all, to conquer for her sake.

They met the next day again. They went to the theater and to supper, and again the subject of her home came up in the conversation. "Sunday I am going to invite you to call and see my house if Burrill isn't in. I'll go out there about ten thirty and you come at eleven. Come down the street toward the house, and I'll be in the bay window. If he isn't there I'll shake my head 'Yes' for you to come to the door, but if I shake it 'No' it will mean that he is in. In that case pass by on the street and go around the square and I'll meet you at the corner where you stood that night when you first saw the bungalow."

Sunday came on lagging hours. The forenoon seemed endless until the hour arrived for him to start, and by speediest car he arrived at the Avenue on which the bungalow was situated. Up it he went for the first time in his life with the bungalow full in his view. In the darkness he had not discerned the nature of the bungalow, which appeared in the daylight a thing of beauty. It was entirely of stucco with red fireproof roofing and the whole dainty appearance gave one the impression that the builder was of artistic eye. Just

beyond was an oak crowned hill, where wild birds sang, and its parlor windows looked out on open oak and pine woods rising to rocky, fern-clad eminences.

As Vir approached, all atremble, he beheld Dunora's face and form in the bay window. Which way would she nod? For a moment he felt like the gladiators in the ancient Roman Coliseum when, defeated and waiting for the verdict of the blood-thirsty populace, they waited the thumbs down which meant death or the thumbs up which meant life. But even if Burrill was within Vir knew that his stay there was but for a little time longer. As Dunora smiled on Vir she nodded "No" and pointed toward the kitchen indicating that Burrill was there, so he passed by without changing his expression. Continuing through the woodland on either side he turned around the square and came to the place of meeting, and Dunora was there awaiting him.

"You may wonder why I have not wanted you to see Mr. Burrill. The reason is that I dislike him so much that I do not want to dishonor you by meeting him." In this indirect way did Vir learn more of what her estimation of him then was. Not by direct statement, but by inference, all the more sweet, did Vir proceed in his knowledge of how he stood in Dunora's mind.

A few days later Dunora and Vir went to the Auditorium in Lynn and witnessed a performance of "Shore Acres." Its State of Maine locale brought pleasure to them both. As they sat there preparatory to gathering up their wrappings and going out to her home, at the door of which he was to leave her, he could not help the thought that he wished he

did not have to leave her at the door, but that by right of love, by right of holy love, by right of fellow ownership and by right of protection he might enter that bungalow door. Strange enough, that very wish was to have its fulfillment, in part, that very night.

The performance ceased, and they filed out with the crowd, waiting for their car at the very door of the theater. When they got on the car it was well filled except forward on the right-hand side. The very first seat was unoccupied, also the longitudinal seat in front of it. They did not notice that the car stopped at the next white post and that among others a man got on also. While they were engaged in conversation this man passed forward in the car and sat down directly in front of them on the long seat.

"That is Burrill. He saw us get on and he is after you," said Dunora in subdued voice. As a matter of form Dunora introduced the younger to the older man. Vir, as a matter of form also, said: "I am glad to meet you, Mr. Burrill." Burrill glowered at him for a moment without speaking. Then he gutturalled: "Well, I'm not glad to meet you, young man!"

Inwardly Vir smiled, for nothing would have displeased him more than to have had Burrill glad to meet him. Burrill was so open in showing his hostility that it was amusing. He sat there for a time scowling at them as if desiring to eat Vir alive, but Vir, having had some experiences in life, was far from disconcerted, and returned his frown with a smile. Not progressing easily along the highway of browbeating, Burrill got uneasy. He began to get

ill at ease in Vir's company and fidgeted back and forth on the plush seat.

Finally he leaned toward Dunora and said, rather huskily: "I'll go back to Lynn and get a bunch of the fellows and come over to the house in an automobile." He then got off the car. There came a look on Dunora's face which pained Vir. He read in it suppressed anxiety. But before he had a chance to frame a question Dunora spoke:

"Burrill is going back to Lynn to gather up a crowd of loafers at the saloons to come out to my house to cause trouble." She paused as if hesitating to say what was in her mind. Then she added: "A few weeks ago he did the same thing. He was drunk and he got a crowd of his human wrecks piled into an automobile and they drove up to my house when I was all alone in it. As he was paying rent and had a key he let them all in, and I was alone with six intoxicated men whom he had induced to make trouble for me. I was in the kitchen at the time, and they all staggered in there led by a saloon-keeper named Leavitt. He was so full of rum bravery that he began to tell me what he was going to do to myself and my house.

"'Oho, my fine lady,' brawled Leavitt, 'we've got you now where we want you! You, with all your fine manners! What good will they do you now?' And he laughed the laugh of the brute beast he was. 'No one will see us here! Oh, so pure and good! By God, we'll fix that!' and he made a rush for me. My brain had been working rapidly while he spoke and assistance came unexpectedly. I had my back to the pantry, and by some providential happening my great carving knife was within my reach. I

grasped it and held it aloft. He, coward that he was, stopped instantly. 'Leavitt, you dog, if you come one step nearer I'll bury this in you!' He recoiled. 'Now get out of my house quick! Go to your poor wife, you brute!' And the crowd tumbled over themselves in getting into that automobile."

As Vir listened to this tale he shuddered at the possibilities had those drunken beasts been dealing with a less determined girl than Dunora. Then he said: "God be thanked that you were as brave as you were. I can't think of it without shuddering. I'm going to ask you to let me come out to your house to-night. To the dickens with the conventionalities. You are in danger, and I'd be no man if I didn't try to protect you."

Dunora replied in calm voice: "Oh, you needn't come. I'm all right. I have dealt with him and his crowd before, and I can do it again. He may bring out a new pack to-night."

## CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

### FAREWELL HELL

Vir's jaw stiffened, though not perceptibly to an onlooker. "Dunora," he said, "I'm going to go out to your house with you, and that's all there is to it." "Oh, don't be foolish, Vir. Just ride on to Boston to your room and I'll get off at the Avenue and go to the house and I'll be all right. You need your sleep and it will take you a long time to get to your room anyway. You just keep on the car and I'll quickly get to the house and go to bed."

"Dunora Whitney, I'm far more determined to go with you than you are not to have me, so do not waste words as I am coming to your house even if you lock me out, and I have to stay outside." They were arriving at the Avenue as they were speaking, and both alighted from the car and started up the dark Avenue. Dunora blithely said: "Since you are so considerate I will not lock you out, but you can come right in and sit down in the parlor." Vir laughed. "Dunora, we did not think that I would see your house for the first time under such circumstances. It will make the house doubly precious to enter it first in the rôle of a protector."

They came to the greensward in front of the bungalow, and in the slight glow of the distant street incandescent lamp he again beheld at close quarters

the beautiful stucco cottage. They mounted the steps to the piazza and he stood on a floor of the house at last. Dunora fitted her key to the lock, she stepped within, touched a button and the interior was flooded with light. He stepped within also, the door was closed and he had the inestimable pleasure of being with her in her own home.

She carried him through it, showed him the various rooms, the tidy kitchen and pantry save for the signs of Burrill's debauchery since she had been there. Vir was impressed with the great care and neatness with which Dunora had arranged every article which came under her supervision. The house was well furnished, but lacked that indefinable quality which changes a house into a home.

There was a strained feeling as they waited there, for both sat in the parlor facing each other from opposite corners of the room and awaiting developments. Hour after hour dragged by as they sat there with lights on and curtains raised so that any one outside might see all within. Nine, ten, eleven, twelve, one, two struck and no sign of any one, although every sound outside was construed to be the crowd coming.

At length Vir said, "It doesn't look as if we were to be honored by a call to-night. We have been up nearly all night to-night, so what do you say to making a night of it and going outside now and taking a walk to wake us up."

Dunora suggested that they go to Lynn, to which suggestion Vir objected, as it was six miles, and no cars were going at that early hour. "Let us walk then," said the girl. "Well, if you feel like it, we will and we will find some restaurant open and will

get some food and coffee to brace us up. Burrill must have lost courage or become too intoxicated."

They started out together, and Vir suggested, "Possibly Burrill came near your bungalow and, seeing both of us through the windows, concluded not to enter." They walked down to the main avenue and saw no one. On the main avenue to East Saugus they walked without seeing a living being. As they walked down Lincoln Avenue, East Saugus, an officious young policeman followed them a block and, as they stopped at a corner, caught up with them. He said to Vir: "Say, what are you doing out here at this time of night?"

The question surely provoked a satirical answer, and Vir thought of saying: "We are somnambulists," but for fear of the effect of that word on so intelligent an executive he refrained lest he be accused of assaulting an officer. The answer given was to the effect that they were indulging in the dangerous pastime of walking from her house to Lynn for the reason that they couldn't ride, there being nothing on which to ride.

It was a long six miles, but a joyful one, at least for Vir, for he was alone with the girl of his heart. Soon the environs of Lynn came, and then the shoe factories, the Common, City Hall Square, Market Street, Munroe Street and Central Square. There they found the Waldorf Lunch open and refreshed themselves both by resting and eating.

"Isn't Burrill's month up in a week now?" asked Vir. "Yes." "Has he made a move to get out?" "Not any. I shall not return to the house till I have the keys he now has, and if he is not out in a few days, I'll have a lawyer see to it."

"I propose this, little girl. You are very tired and have been under considerable worry and care. You need rest. I'll go with you to your lady friend's in Everett, and you go in there, pull the curtains down and go to sleep, forgetting everything." "But if I do that what will you do?" asked Dunora. "I'll go up to my room, try to sleep for an hour and then I'll feel all made anew. Now will you do it?" "Yes, thank you, I will." They took the early electrics a little later in the morning and went to Chelsea Square where they changed for the Everett cars, and Vir left her at the cottage door again. Then he hurried to the city and to his room where he soon tumbled beneath the bed clothes and all but fell asleep.

They had agreed to meet again the next afternoon, and he was to call for her at the cottage door. Before the appointed hour he was there and before the appointed hour she saw him from within and she came out. "Let's go to a moving picture theater and forget all excitement," he suggested, and she smilingly assented with: "That is just what I should like to do." So to a theater near at hand they went.

Two or three days more passed, during which they met daily, each day lessening the stay of Burrill in the house of Dunora. On the third day after going to the theater Dunora told Vir that she might have need of him again before the week was out. Finally the last day on which Burrill could stay in the house came. Dunora found out by inquiry that he was still there.

During quite a time past Dunora had clung to the hope that Burrill would not act so inhumanely as

to cause her to even cease to consider him a friend. Because of this thought she had endured some deprivations she would not otherwise have endured, such as that scene in which Leavitt was the chief brute, for Burrill had helped her to find Irene sometime since. Consequently she hoped he wouldn't become as bad as he did become, but now that he had she was determined to get him out of her house forever.

On this last day to which he had paid rent Dunora and Vir met by appointment, and Dunora said, "Vir, I want you to come out to the town with me. I'm going to get Burrill out of that house." Dunora's lady friend was with her. "We will all three go out," added Dunora. In an hour they were there and went in sight of the house and saw that Burrill was there.

Dunora had a strange and unusual independence with which Vir learned not to interfere. Often he just ached to do things according to his own will and not hers, but in deference to her he yielded his will. In spite of the education and experience he had he became willing to admit that in many things Dunora's judgment was superior. It hurt his pride to admit this, but he had to if he would be honest with himself. In the case just then Dunora led him to do just the opposite to what he would have done himself.

He would have gone down to the house with Dunora as her protector, that was his place to be, but Dunora would not listen to it this time. "If you had not stopped off at the house with me that night I would have had nothing more to do with you. I tried to get you to go on in the car, but I am very

glad you didn't. But to-day is different. I will take my lady friend with me and it is broad daylight. Burrill is alone, and even if he wanted to he wouldn't dare to try to do anything when I had a witness with me. We two will go down and I'll just formally demand him to leave. If he doesn't I'll need you to do something for me."

Dunora and Mrs. Fuller ascended the steps to Dunora's bungalow and Dunora inserted her key and unlocked the door. Through the open door at the rear of the hall they looked into the kitchen and saw Burrill sitting there, legs crossed, scowling, with the stub of a cigar in his mouth. When he saw Mrs. Fuller he scowled the more deeply. He arose and came toward them. Dunora's face was a study. Mrs. Fuller had seen Burrill several times before, and her opinion of him was not high, neither was his of her.

"Mr. Burrill," said Dunora, in that low, soft voice that would be a blessing in a sick room as it was in every day life, "I have more than once asked you to vacate this house which is mine, and you know me well enough to know that the time for idling about my request is past. You paid rent in advance or I would have had you out of here before this, but now the time has arrived when your rent no longer is in advance. I demand these premises to-day!"

Burrill gutturalled: "I see you have brought your friend. What is it, do you want a witness?" "Possibly. But what I do want is for you to leave at once and I intend to have you do it. Now once more I demand these premises!"

"Aw, come into the parlor and get rid of your friend, I want to talk to you alone. I'm not going

to discuss my affairs before any one else!" exclaimed Burrill. "If you want to discuss anything with me you're going to discuss it right here," said Dunora, with a look about her eyes and mouth which he knew how to interpret.

Then he put on a hurt tone. "Oh, Dunora, be sensible. Think what I've done for you and what I can do for you. You've got this house on your hands and you want me to get out now when it's winter. You can't rent it again this winter, and you can't afford to lose the rent on it." He put his hand in his pocket and drew out a roll of bills. "Here's the rent three months in advance. Come, be sensible."

Dunora's alert mind had the happy faculty of being able to picture all sides of a question at once. She saw the home this man had furnished, how he had helped her in a number of ways and had kept the house in food. She saw the possibility of an empty house on her hands in winter and the additional financial burden it would be. Vividly before her eyes in that moment succeeding his flashing the roll of bills came what it would mean to her to do as she purposed to do. On the one hand was that house, the first roof over her head which she could call her own, well furnished, heated, supplied with food and the rent paid. Every week there would be a salary coming to her, and she would not need. But if she insisted on his going it meant that that roof then over her head must be denied her. It meant that after a long time of sufficiency of money and food she must again face want and hunger, and that she must again go to work, if she could find any. It meant she must go to a hired room. And in addi-

tion to supporting herself again in the heartless world she must face the additional burden of paying monthly on an empty house.

"Come," he repeated, "here are three months in advance!" "Mr. Burrill, I am not parading before my friend the misery through which you have put me, making me the nervous invalid I am. You know how I have clung to a hopeless situation hoping you would reform. You know I have never done you a wrong. In return you bring out your drunken friends to insult and try to injure me. Only recently did I learn where you got your income. I have told no one, but you know me too well to think that I would ever accept another dollar from you. I am not here to bandy words. I order you to leave this house!"

Burrill flew into a rage. "By God!" he yelled, "it's a good thing you brought your witness with you or I'd knock your head off! Damn you! You think you'll get me out of this house, do you? Well, you won't!"

Dunora made no sign of emotion, but turned to Mrs. Fuller and said, "Come with me!" They walked out and went to Vir.

With the impatience of a panther at bay, Vir Noble waited for the return of the two. Soon they came. Dunora was very calm. "You should have seen him. He was very angry. That's why I didn't want you to come, for he would have flown into a passion. As it was he refused to leave and said, 'It's a good thing you brought this girl with you, for I'd just like to break you to pieces.'

"Now, Vir, I want you to telephone the constable of this town for me and ask him to meet me at the

house in fifteen minutes. We will wait here till about that time, and then walk down together." Vir telephoned, and the constable replied that he would be there at the time mentioned. They went down when the time came, and Dunora and the constable went to the house and rang the bell. Burrill came to the door and the constable displayed his authority and demanded his vacating. Burrill replied: "You go to——!" With that they grappled and rolled onto the piazza, where the constable mastered him. He was carried into court and there put out on bail with the words that if he was seen near that house again his bail would be considered forfeited. The neighbors were all notified to telephone in if Burrill was seen in that locality again. Thus was the exit of Burrill.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

### GLORY ADVANCES

UP in his lonely room in Boston where he was accustomed to spend his idle hours in writing Vir sat subsequent to the occurrence just mentioned. He was buried in thought, and it is safe to say that that thought centered about Dunora. On a sudden the telephone bell above his head rang. Who could be telephoning to him there? No one ever did before.

He arose, pushed aside his chair, stepped to the telephone and called, "Hullo! Hullo!" "Is that you, Vir?" came over the wire in a voice he instantly recognized. Hallelujah! It was Dunora! Instantly that room received a flood of light radiated from even the voice of Dunora. How often he had tossed on that bed oblivious of his surroundings and mindful only of Dunora. At this time when the voice of Dunora made inquiry if that was Vir he responded with gladness, "Yes."

There was a little hesitation before she spoke again. "Vir, I am over in Everett in the cottage where you have been to the door. My friend and I are all alone. Mrs. Fuller's husband isn't here, and you know I am not very fond of him. I'm lonely, and you may come over if you wish. Will you?"

Would he? He surely would. He forgot himself

and answered: "You bet I will!" He hung up the receiver with emphasis and rushed downstairs and ran to the elevated railroad station in such haste that passersby turned and looked. But he cared not for what others thought of him, he was going to Dunora, and that is all of which he thought.

After climbing the stairs to the elevated railroad platform it seemed that a Washington Street train would never come. Finally it did, and then it seemed to creep through the tunnel and even slower to the Charlestown bridge where, of course, the draw was open and, of course, it was open a long time. The soliloquys of Vir would have made interesting reading.

At length even the draw closed and the train went on to Sullivan Square, where there was another wait for a surface car, and another crowd through which to push. But even such delayed journeys have their happy ending, and Vir arrived at the desired street and came to Mrs. Fuller's cottage, and—oh, joy—Dunora opened the door.

"What made you so long? You didn't seem in a hurry to get here," stated Dunora. Vir, confused as he was, told an untruth which he didn't mean as such. He should have stated that the train was delayed, but instead he blurted out: "Oh, I stopped to get a little dinner." Possibly it may be said to his shame that he did not desire Dunora to know that he hurried on all but wings to get where he knew the glory of his life would advance.

They went into the parlor of the little cottage and there Vir was alone with the girl of his heart and alone where they were not under the stress of anticipated strife. Already Vir was more than

shown how much he, the man who had worked for everything he had attained, was becoming dependent upon this girl of heroic nature for the bringing to life and upbuilding of many qualities in him the existence of which he had only dreamed. No clinging parasite of a vine was this girl, no sapper of the blood of ambition and all desire to struggle upward.

And as Vir saw very plainly that she was one who would require only the best in him he began to fear her. But this is not as blameworthy as it seems. He feared only lest he fail to come up to her standard and lest, failing to do so, he should grow to put out on her his deepest love for that would mean his very self. And if once that love wound its tentacles around Dunora he knew that she would have in her absolute possession the power to make him all that it was possible to make of him or the power to throw him to the direct opposite. Knowing this, therefore, he began to fear her. He feared to let go the restraint on love.

Oh, what a joy as he sat in that little parlor! Dunora drew up a great chair beside him and they talked freer than ever before. In the restaurants or in the theaters there is a restraint and on the streets thoughtful conversation is not easy. He grasped her hand with an added fervor, she looked into his eyes with a closeness never reached before.

There are times when speech is a profanation, when silence speaks. As long as Vir lives that hour in the cottage at Everett will live also. Being tired of sitting they arose and walked to the center of the room. There they stood and their bodies touched. At once over Vir there swept a wave of unbridled emotion. His self restraint all but broke and he al-

most clasped her in his arms and crushed her to his breast which longed to harbor her.

The remainder of that hour so happy for Vir was, on his part, surely a struggle not to go over the brink of restraint. His lonely life at last finding its mate and that mate far from knowing it made it a very difficult matter not to overdo. So many years had seen self repression that with happiness in his grasp he longed to close his hand on it.

She was coy. She dangled him as a fish on a line and he just loved to hold her in his vision. What talking they did was mostly irrelevant to any definite purpose at first. Mrs. Fuller busied herself about the kitchen so that if they wished to keep their conversation private they might do so. As their talking progressed Vir asked her what she planned to do. She was receiving no income from her house now and its monthly expenses were accruing just the same. He surmised that her income was not excessive.

"I hardly know my plans now. I have no great responsibilities so can do some things which I could not if I had those I had formerly. I suppose I will hire a room somewhere until I rent my house, but I confess I do not want to rent it. It is the first roof I ever had over my head which I could call my own and I very much dislike the idea of giving it up for another to occupy. But I don't see anything else to do." "I have a suggestion," said Vir. "I have nothing to work for except an indefinite selfish future. Any future planned entirely by one's self is selfish no matter how lofty the plans. Those plans must necessarily be thought of in connection with one's individual future. I want to plan for another.

It will broaden me and I can well afford to be broadened. It will also give me an added incentive to work and that means success. In plain words I hope you will let me keep the expenses of that house paid until some other means of doing it appears. I can at least pay the expenses till it is again occupied."

"Why, Vir, why did you ask me that? You knew I wouldn't say 'Yes,' or even entertain such a thought. There is no telling what good fortune may come to me soon and in the meantime I will keep it running. Even if I wanted to it would be difficult to rent it at this season. I cannot endure the thought of any one else living in that house." It may be added that Vir could not endure any other thought than their both living therein, but the time was not then ripe. Oh, that it had been!

The girl added, "To-morrow I will have to go out to it to see what it looks like after the former occupant left. If you wish to you may go out with me." "With exceeding pleasure," said Noble. Then in the quiet of that little room where the sanctity of her presence was Vir inwardly resolved to make every effort to rise to the requirements which this noble girl set before herself as the prerequisites of manhood.

The next day, early in the forenoon, they met again and went to her bungalow. For the first time they entered it with no cloud in the nearby sky and their hearts were light. But what a sight met their gaze as they opened the door and went within. The house was absolutely bare, even Dunora's desk, formerly in the corner of the parlor, was gone. All that remained were the four bare walls to each room. But the downstairs floors were far from bare. The earmarks of debauchery were in many places.

In front of the once tidy fireplace in the parlor were scores of burnt matches, and in the middle of that parlor floor was a great burned spot where some ruffian, untouched by the sanctity of that blessed institution home, had cast a lighted match. It was only by God's providence and not because of the brute's forethought that that dear house did not have a conflagration. So much do human dogs think of a woman of honor who put her money into a home instead of riotous living. "Cast not your pearls before swine."

All through the lower part of the house beer, whiskey and gin bottles were scattered and another burning match had been cast on the hardwood kitchen floor. Outside one of the kitchen windows the cement side of the house was stained where food had been emptied.

In the cellar was another sight for broken liquor bottles were in various places and in one part was Dunora's desk, the only piece of furniture belonging to her which had been in the house, broken to pieces by an axe, a favor shown by Burrill and his pals to the struggling girl. Certainly liquor is a great promoter of the milk of human kindness.

As they were in the cellar surveying the wreckage there came to Vir's mind the words of the Master of men, and Vir, looking into the eyes of Dunora and sweeping his arm in a gesture over the scene on the cellar floor remarked, "By their fruits ye shall know them."

Then they both proceeded to clean the house from the upper story to the cellar. Every nook and corner, every cranny and crevice, every crack and orifice was brushed and cleaned with a neatness and

thoroughness which bespoke their interest in that bungalow and their desire to erase from it every sign of the former occupancy.

Vir carefully picked up every burned match and every piece of the burned wood which fell off from the matches. The assiduity with which he swept up every particle of those wooden igniters revealed his dislike for the character who had lived there. While they were engaged in cleaning Vir had the first opportunity to observe how Dunora worked and it was both a pleasant and an unpleasant revelation to him. It was pleasant as it showed her to be an indefatigable worker and unpleasant because he feared lest she work so hard as to injure herself.

"Dunora, I never saw such a worker as you are in all my life. You went at the cleaning of this house just as I noticed you have gone at other matters, as if you really meant it and forgot everything else at the time."

"Let's enjoy looking over the house, as it is now clean," laughed Dunora, evading his remark.

And this is what Vir saw. As he entered he came into a cosy hall with hardwood floor and ample stairs rising spirally to the second floor. These were all finished in hardwood as well. To the left of the dainty hall opened a door into the sunlit parlor and in the inner corner of the parlor was a fireplace. A bay window on the southern side of the house revealed a view of distant hill and pleasant field at the farther end of which were other houses. The front window in that parlor gave an entrancing view of open woods rising to gently sloping heights.

Through a broad double door one entered the dining room with plate-rail and china closet and ample

light from windows opening toward the south and west. Then the cosiest of kitchens opened from the northern side of the dining room and connected the dining room and front hall. A pantry where every inch was made practical extended from the western end of the kitchen, and beside it was the back hall opening onto a sunny western porch.

Up the spiral stairs were the upper hall, bath room and bed rooms where, through some window, the sun could shine all day. It was a house of sun, a house where shadows had been, but where the sun was rapidly pushing all shadows away. Its wide and hospitable windows spread their breadth in inviting the sun's rays within and seemed to smile upward as the sun kissed them. The glory of the lamp of nature bathed it by day and the glory of the silvery moon laved its head by night. Glory shone around and through it and glory advanced thereby.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

### THE PROPOSAL

ENTRANCED with the beauty of her home and with the views of nature surrounding, Vir for a moment lapsed into pleasant thought. The indirect influence of the ceasing of the previous tension also had its quieting effect upon him. They were both in the sunlit dining room at the time.

Within his breast surged the ardent fire of a passionate love. This he had never yet revealed to her by any word. Through his mind at the time sped the panorama of the years, the biting storms of a lonely and misread life, the thrilling experiences of a life of struggle. And associated with that passionate love came the refining feelings of a great longing for the cessation of that selfish contest and a renewing of the struggle of life for the sake of one more worthy. Oh, the years through which he had yearned for the girl now before him! Oh, the midnight hours spent in dreaming of her as his eyes were wide and staring into the future! And the castles in Spain he had built around her before he knew her and now that he knew her those castles in Spain had become real castles with a glory far exceeding that surrounding his former castles in the air.

All this went through his mind with the pulsing waves of his mighty passion for his very efforts to

hold it in check but dammed it up till it rose over the obstruction and poured in a wild torrent at last free. And in its wild rushing over the dam of previous restraint Vir Noble was himself swept.

He turned. Dunora stood at the window and at just that time she was in the attitude to remove even the sand riffs that might impede the rushing of that deluge. Her eyes were fixed and filled with that far-away, pained look which had gripped his heart before. Very obviously, in the time in which Vir had experienced his flood of passionate thought, Dunora had flown away on the wings of reverie.

Speech came to Vir in a mellow, rich and sweet tone which he had never heard his voice give forth before. He was to stand before that noble woman in his true attitude at last, in the attitude of a passionate lover, of a reverential and humble adorer.

“Dunora!”

With a start, caused by her coming out of her reverie, Dunora turned toward Vir and though her thoughts had been far flung she had heard and had comprehended that mellow, rich and sweet resonance in his speech. Therefore she advanced toward him with the sweetest smile that, seemingly, ever basked upon the face of woman. That smile of blessing gave him courage. It grasped, as it were, his hand and led his faltering steps up over the mountain of his own unworthiness which loomed in dizzy heights between himself and her. It shone upon him in utter frankness and priceless trust.

In that moment as she advanced toward him he overpoweringly comprehended what he was about to do. He was about to ask her a question upon which more hung than upon any other question his lips

could ever frame on earth. It was a question he had never framed before, and therefore one that had never been asked by him of any other woman. But ask it he must and those trusting eyes backed up by that previous look of pain impelled him onward in addition to his heart's passion.

"Dunora!"

"What is it, Vir?"

"Oh, Dunora, I cannot keep it in longer! Oh, haven't you seen it? Haven't you felt it? It masters me! Dunora—I—love—you. I confess I have fought against it, but its very insistence proves its truth. I love you! I adore the ground you walk on, the air you breathe. I reverence the roof that protects you and, oh, Dunora, with all the passion of my being, with all the strength within me I pray with beseeching words to become your real protector, to work for you and because of you. I love you! I —love—you!" He threw back his head and his eyes flashed the absolute sincerity of his soul.

"Will you be my wife?"

The look of surprise which began to dawn on Dunora's dear face as soon as the meaning of Vir's impassioned words appeared, soon broadened and, a moment after he had asked her the momentous question she came right to him, held him direct in her gaze and said, "Why, Vir, you have surprised me. I hadn't thought of your looking at our friendship in that way." In that instant Vir knew that though his heart was filled with love the sacred fire was not thus with her. She continued, "You have asked me the most precious question you could ask me and I will answer you fully but not now. We will go back to my room and you can leave me there to-night and

come out there to-morrow forenoon and I will give you your answer."

A feeling of sacredness came over them both and conversation was not much indulged in on the return journey to Dunora's room. With Vir great wonder strove to obtain the mastery over great uncertainty. At the cottage house Vir said, "Good night," with trembling lips and she, out of the goodness of her heart, held his hand long in her tender grasp. He went to Boston and she to her room to be alone.

Alone to think. That was certainly not strange, one always thinks, but the object of those thoughts. A proposal, why that is not strange either. What girl over fifteen hasn't thought over a proposal? But one from this man. Dunora was thinking about Vir and what he had asked her to become. His wife. She had heard several men say almost those same words before. Her answer had always been, no. Why did she hesitate to say no this time? Dunora knew not.

This girl, who had cared for herself since early womanhood, who had lived almost always alone, confiding in no one, was lonely. Who knows that dreadful feeling, tearing of the heart, making that heart harder and colder. If you have not you cannot know why Dunora was thinking so very much about what Vir had said. A strong, young, good looking, educated and perhaps talented man had offered to care for her, was anxious to, deemed it an honor. Who had ever wanted to just care for and love her before? No one. What would life with this man mean to this lonely girl? She dared not think. All these questions were asked of herself.

What did she know of him? What she saw. A man, tall and as straight as an arrow, powerful and strong. He had not what would be called a handsome face, but a face that one instantly trusted for its honesty; the beautiful, large, frank brown eyes compelled you to trust. Firm, almost stern, were the lines about his mouth, chin as determined as our Puritan ancestors. The face even when most determined was like sunshine, the eyes were so filled with laughter. An excellent disposition, but not perfect.

Dunora was looking for perfection. She knew little of the Bible so knew not that perfection does not belong to this world.

In some ways Vir seemed selfish to her. That she always despised in any one. He seemed too conceited as though he expected to get just what he asked for, even her. Were these thoughts just a shadow of her lonely, hateful life? If these faults were not there would she say yes to Vir?

A picture of that horrible marriage of that happy school girl of fifteen came before her eyes, she shuddered. Her face became lined with pain. She looked years older. They seemed too deep to ever come off. What spirit within was strong, great enough to carry those lines away?

Another picture, a beautiful one, a baby girl with golden curls. A face one could mistake for a stray sunbeam came before her eyes. How strangely that face looked like the face of Dunora. A tear fell, another, another, a flood of them, the gathering storm had burst in all its fury. The calm came, the lines disappeared like magic. Dunora knew her answer to Vir Noble, the most priceless question an honorable man can ask a good woman.

Those two words, "until death," uttered so long ago, by that minister, had sunken into her very soul.

But she must explain to Vir. Their friendship made that necessary. Could she give up happiness, could she take happiness away from him, could she look at those honest brown eyes and explain? Yes, she must. She believed in duty, and never did, and never would turn away from duty as she saw it no matter how painful the task.

Vir went to his room and speedily went to sleep with pleasant dreams of Dunora. His was the inward feeling that she would not refuse the offer. Even if she did not love him he felt that she would not refuse him. What little he knew of her lonely life and what he actually knew of her need of a home and a protector persuaded him to think this. Furthermore he had a rather good opinion of himself, he felt that in offering himself to her he had greatly honored her, for he had waited many years, and had never made that offer to another and he had always endeavored to conduct his life as a man should. Consequently it was with light and airy step that he went to the cottage in Everett.

Dunora opened the door as he came into the yard and on her face was a look of kindness which all the more swelled Vir's sense of egotism. Inwardly he rejoiced that he had at last spoken the words upon which so much depended and which his assurance told him had been favorably received.

He had always held Dunora in such reverence that the usual method of love making had not been the one with Vir. Continually a sense of his unfitness had held him back until at last the bursting over of the dam had brought with its flood the thoughts

of relief and assurance. As they entered Vir looked at Dunora more closely and then noticed dark lines under her eyes. Mrs. Fuller had gone and the two were alone in the cottage to talk to their heart's content uninterrupted by listening ears.

As they went into the little parlor Vir grasped both her hands and he looked full at her. For a moment her great, frank eyes fell but then they lifted. "Vir, dear, I told you that you would have your answer now. You shall. It has to be no." She disengaged one hand, reached behind her to the table and drew therefrom a framed picture. She held it out toward him without a word. Vir gazed at the picture of a little girl.

He started, gazed at it more fixedly. Around the little head curls hung and the sweet child face was but a representation of what Dunora might have been as a child. "What a charming picture of you as a child. But what does that have to do with the answer? How long ago was that taken?"

A look indescribable came over Dunora's face. For a moment she hesitated, then said slowly, "It was taken three years ago!" Vir looked at her nonplused. Then he gathered his faculties. "Why, the little girl looks remarkably like you. She surely is a relative." Again Dunora hesitated. Then she spoke firmly. "She is a relative. She is my daughter."

A fly hitting against Vir Noble in its flight would have knocked him to the floor. There is no statement which she could possibly have made which would have dumbfounded him more. In all his life he had not received such a staggering statement from the lips of any human being. "She is my

daughter." Yes, he had heard aright. Not a word came to him to say. A very thunderbolt had smitten him.

She saw the look of wonder and of mystification pass over his face and she cleared the latter feeling by uttering four words. "I have been married. My name is not Whitney but Boynton, but so few people know that I have been married that I go by my former name."

Up to that moment Vir Noble had no more idea that that young girl had been married than he would have had of permitting an own daughter of his to have done so at such a tender age as he reasoned she must have been to have had a daughter of the age shown in the picture added to the three years since it was taken. The statement completely bereft him of his reasoning faculties. He could do nothing but suffer a whirl of imaginings to whirligig through his brain.

In the instant after the dear girl had made the double declaration Vir's hand had gone to his forehead in the attitude a man takes when suddenly struck by an overwhelming piece of news. As his hand was over his eyes before his mental vision at last came the explanation for at least part of that pained and far away expression he had seen depicted on her features.

Dunora came to him with womankind's tender mercy. She knew the severity of the blow she had struck but she had struck it because she desired to do so. She prayed in her heart that it might not be a blow but she knew full well that it would be. She had been asked the most momentous question which could possibly be asked her and her sense of duty

made her make a full and frank answer and this was part of it.

As she touched Vir with her body she put her hands on his shoulders and softly said, "Vir, dear, come to the sofa and we will sit down and I will explain. I will tell you what has never crossed my lips before." They sat on the cushioned sofa. For just a moment Dunora sat buried in thought. How should she begin? Surely from the very beginning.

And from her earliest infancy she told the story of her adoption and all that came thereafter in the home in Gardiner, of her school days, her pranks, her deprivations, her self denials, her loveless existence finally to arrive at the time of the hideous travesty caused by her foster parents' heartlessness. "Oh, Vir," she exclaimed in the agony of remembrance, "just think of it. I met that man on July fourth, and in August was married to him. And I was only fifteen years of age, a little country girl with love crushed out of me and entirely ignorant of things of the world and utterly unknowing anything at all of the meaning of marriage in even one of its relations.

"Oh, Vir, how could it have happened? May God forgive them as I do, but even though He might forgive them He did not remove the penalty. They suffered it. Why, if that man had come to my father and asked him for my father's horse for nothing, my father would have kicked him out of the house, but when he asked for me for nothing they smiled on him with pleasure and gave me, a human being, to this unknown person three times my age.

"He might have had a wife then. They didn't ask him. He might have just come out of prison. They

didn't ask him. He might have been a murderer, a thief, a forger, an immoral and diseased worldling. They didn't ask him." And then her little body bent and she sobbed.

Vir, during this recital, had listened spellbound. He had grasped every word as a pickerel grasps his food. But when the head of Dunora fell Vir just let all restraint go and put his arm around her for the first time in his life and drew her to him and Vir felt the sobs grow less and less.

He spoke not, but as the exquisite sensation of having her so close to him thrilled him there went through his mind the thought of the great honor she had conferred upon him and the great agony it must have been to her in thus baring her very soul. After they had thus remained in silence quite a time each engaged in thought, Vir spoke.

"Dunora, what has that to do with the question I asked you yesterday? What you have told me but draws me the more closely to you, and, surely, you are not married to that person now?"

Through her inflamed eyes Dunora looked into his. "No, I am not married now; but, Vir, I do not love you. Love is of slow growth. I value you as a friend above all others, but I do not love you." What had transpired had subdued Vir. His assurance had fled quite a time since. Dunora, exhausted by the recital of her heart's woe, arose. He also did and the girl said, "Vir, dear, I must ask to be excused now and go to my room and rest." She paused. "Vir," she added, "do not feel badly at what I have said." Again she paused. She straightened momentarily and lifted her head so as to throw up her Grecian chin, "Vir—be a man!"

Low he bent his head. Slowly he lifted her little hand and kissed it. She passed through the door and went up the stairs. He gathered his outer garments and went to the front door where, to his astonishment, he met Mrs. Fuller entering.

"How do you do, Vir?" she said. Then looking around and seeing that Dunora was not present she said in lower tones, "Dunora tells me that you asked her to become your wife and that she was to give you your answer to-day. I hope it was a favorable one." "It was not," replied Vir, and he then excused himself and went out through the little yard.

Vir went to his office much more slowly than he had come from Boston and a much wiser man possessing a lesser supply of egotism. He had much to think over and no business was done by him that day. The last few hours had been the greatest shock to his self esteem he had ever experienced. He had been with Dunora on many little recreations for a long time, he had disclosed to her many things about himself which he surely thought would impress her favorably. Many of his acts for the past weeks had been such as to naturally cause her to depend upon him to a more or less degree and that dependence should breed trust and affection under normal conditions.

But Vir Noble had much to learn about himself that was not pleasing to his vanity and this great shock was the first earthquake which caused part of the walls of his castle of content to fall in ruins. As never before he began to search himself. And he did this honestly. This wonderful woman had refused the greatest offer he could make to her and refused it because she did not love him.

That night when he went to his rooms, now all the more lonely, he humbled himself in prayer. He poured out his heart before the mercy seat, the only place where he could pour it out, and he asked that he be shown his faults and be given the courage to overcome them. And the night was one never to be forgotten.

As soon as he deemed it expedient on the following day Vir called at the cottage in Everett and again was with the girl of his love, again to take up the struggle which was shown to be needed by her parting words of the day before: "Vir—be a man!" They started anew with no reference to the great question asked by Vir and just discussed by them both. Each had spoken, each understood.

But even that day, the very following one after they had spoken, Vir noticed a deepening of the black lines under Dunora's eyes. It worried him much. Sleeplessness had been the dear girl's portion for the words of Vir and his love for her were not matters this honest and true girl had taken in any other way than with their deepest meaning. And they meant very much to her.

As often as business permitted and very often when business did not permit, Vir came to the little cottage in Everett to be with Dunora. Many were the occasions on which they went to various restaurants together, and frequently to the theaters, where Vir sought by every reasonable means to lessen those dark lines under her eyes, but to no avail. Thinner and thinner she got, more hollow grew her cheeks and more nervous she became.

Soon after their talk in which Dunora let out the secret of her heart Vir came to the cottage and

found with Dunora a little sunny haired girl, blue eyed, laughing, rosy and dear. It was Irene. How soon his heart went out to the little lass! How soon she had a firm hold on his heartstrings! She was a wonder child to him, part of the girl he loved, the rosy, beautiful flower that blossomed from her former pain.

And on their little trips together to nearby places Irene frequently went with them. Upon these occasions he saw the wee lassie under many conditions which would be trying to a child's heart, but he never saw her show temper or selfishness or say once to her mother "I won't!" In spite of the fact that she was away from her mother so much at boarding school she was the most perfectly behaved child Vir had ever known and this spoke volumes for the mother who had trained her under such trying conditions and with such a load on her heart. And because of Irene's own worth she took deep and deeper hold upon Vir.

In some of the days that came Dunora told little tales about her disposition and the little girl's faith and unselfishness. "Irene was sick with the scarlet fever once and her thoughts were continually of me and not of herself. I overheard her praying once and her prayer was, 'Dear God, please make me well soon, for my mamma hasn't got much money and can't pay doctor's bills.' At another time Irene was talking to some women and remarked, 'When I grow up I want to be like my mamma.' Upon being asked her reason she replied, 'Because she is so good.' "

In spite of every effort on Vir's part Dunora did not recover from her nervous attacks or from her

worried, anxious appearance. How fervently he besought Him upon the Great White Throne to free her from her affliction in His own good way. Dunora lived during the weeks intervening till Spring at Mrs. Fuller's. Mrs. Fuller was a friend to both and in the long hours of the nights in which she was alone with Dunora she talked much of Vir and turned Dunora's mind more and more in his direction. Dunora, in self defense, offered objections to him and Mrs. Fuller spoke in his behalf. And all the time also there was working on Dunora's well poised mind the evident effort on Vir's part to be more such as she desired.

Higher and higher arose the sun as the weeks progressed and Boston's streets long since had lost their sparsely scattered snow mounds. The great pulse of nature began to throb as the life blood of its resurrection began to course through the veins of old earth. The bluebird floated down from the March skies bearing on his back the blue of the heavens to wed with the brown of the earth on his breast. And among those who strongly felt the call of nature and the balmy Spring were Dunora and Vir. In it they saw the end of the cold and dreary winter, the coming of warmth and growth.

Naturally the minds of both went to the cement bungalow which seemed to call them with its alluring persuasion and more than once they went to it. The frost had melted from their blood and the vigor of the new born warmth of nature flowed therein. They talked less and less of personal subjects, possibly because they thought more of them. The flowing sap of Spring turns human hearts to love and more and

more the heart of Vir with difficulty held its love in restraint.

That dining room in her bungalow brought all the more vividly to his mind the scene when in that room he had declared his love.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

### HOME

O'er earth's wild oceans have I sailed  
In search of earthly bliss;  
On field and plain, through wood and main,  
I've sought for pleasure's kiss.

In marts of men where worldlings crowd,  
I've searched a cure for pain;  
In college academic halls  
I've looked for it in vain.

But ah! Thank God! I've found at last  
Where bliss and pleasure roam;  
'Tis in that thrice hallowed spot  
Which we call home, sweet home.

**D**UNORA!" Again they were in that dining room. Again the mellow, sweet and rich resonance in Vir's passionate voice. She turned toward him with a different expression on her face from that which had been visible there so many months before. Now she knew him better, understood him more. "Oh, Dunora, I must speak! I cannot remain silent longer! I must ask to be your protector! I love you, dear, with every throb which gives me life! There is nothing in me which does not tremble to the

very thought of you! I have kept silent all these months and it is not within my power to do so longer. There is nothing visible, nothing thinkable but you! Dunora, again I ask you, Will you be my wife?"

He stood before her thrilled with the vehemence of his utterance and the passion of his soul. The fire of an intense love shone from his eyes and lighted his face. He, for once, was radiant. He was all anticipation for his answer. Gone forever was his former assurance. He was sure of nothing now but that he loved her with all the intensity of his being. He spoke humbly, as a beggar.

Dunora bent her dear curl crowned head just the smallest trifle with that unconscious coquetry which is one of the diadems on the crown of womanhood. And then she looked at him a little bewildered and astonished. The poor girl was not well and she had not expected this outburst then. And she looked up and down at the form of the big strong man who had asked to be her protector. As she looked at him standing there she realized the depth of his devotion and she knew that in him she could trust. Other thoughts went through her mind at that moment of rapid mental panorama and among them was his love for her child. Then there came that sweet relaxation of the stress of struggle to shoulders made stronger to bear it. "Vir," she softly said, "I will."

Just two words. Just the sweetest words which ever fell on Vir Noble's ears. Just the crown put on his life's struggle. Just giving to him the woman of all women, the most priceless gift that Almighty God could give. That was all. Ah, yes, that was all. "I will." Oh, hallowed words, sacred hour. As

those two words fell on his listening ears, as he heard the words for which his very soul had yearned for all those long drawn out months his emotions swept through him with overwhelming force.

With a glad cry of rapturous joy Vir threw his arms around her and drew her to his breast. He couldn't help it but the tears came. And he was not ashamed. And the precious face was lifted to him and he kissed her and kissed her. "Oh, girlie! girlie!" he cried. And he could say nothing else just then, for he was too full of emotion to frame it into speech.

He put his arm around her and they went into the parlor and sat down on the floor near the cheerful open fire. They did those irrelevant acts which happen at those times for both were overrun with a whirlwind of thoughts. "Oh, girlie! girlie!" he exclaimed again and drew her, oh, so close to him. "Oh, I'm so happy, so happy! God bless you, dear! I don't deserve it! But, by the Eternal, my every effort will be to more and more deserve it! Oh, Dunora, I love you so that I can never, never express it! Words would fail me!" The dear girl looked into his face with, for the first time, a look of utter dependence and said, "Vir, dear, I am giving you my all. I wouldn't if I had not known that I could trust you. You are the only man I ever knew whom I would trust."

He attempted to speak again but she put her hand over his lips and said, "Nothing more on that subject now, dear. You know actions speak louder than words and we do not want too much sentiment at once. Let's sit right here before this open fire and plan ahead a little." "And the first thing to

plan about is our wedding. When will we be married?" broke in Vir. "Oh, you great big boy!" laughed the girl, "there you go blundering the first thing. There are lots of things to think of beside thinking of our wedding. Here is our home. We must think of that. It is entirely bare and must be furnished with rugs, furniture for kitchen, dining room, parlor, hall and bedrooms beside table ware, cooking utensils, coal, towels, bed linen and a lot of other articles I don't think of now. And then there are the running expenses which are not small. Now how about the wedding?" And she laughed. "To-morrow at nine in the forenoon," affirmed Vir.

"Why not make it two hours from now?" she rejoined with a smile. "My dear, you are a little sudden. You know it is the lady's prerogative to name the date." "And your rights shall not be trespassed upon," Vir declared. Sitting there, she resting her head upon his breast, they planned what kind of furniture they wanted for the different rooms and Vir found that her ideas singularly fitted into his own. To think that at last his dream had become a reality, that this wonder woman, this moral heroine, this self-reliant, successful fighter for principle was to become his wife and that that cosy roof was to shield them from the storms without and was to be their home.

In both instances it was to be the first real home that had ever spread its roof over either one of their heads. In their happiness before the open fire they forgot their physical needs until the hour grew late in the afternoon. "Dearie, let us go to Lynn and have a dinner worthy of the occasion." And the dinner that followed was made worthy by happiness.

The next day while Vir was at work Dunora selected the furniture for the home. He had some furniture stored and so did she, but they desired nothing in any way to remind them of the old and so bought entirely new. And shortly thereafter the furniture was moved into the little home, and, upon Dunora's invitation, Vir went out and saw it as she had arranged it. What a difference between that bare house before and the warmed and furnished home then!

As they sat on the soft cushioned couch Dunora said, "Vir, dear, I have a pleasant surprise for you?" "What is it, sweetheart?" "I have set the date for our marriage."

"Joy! Joy!" exclaimed Vir. And right there they talked and planned in a way not to be made public. No prying eye or listening ear should profane the sanctity of the thoughts of these two.

Quietly, amid beautiful natural surroundings, removed from the tawdry glare of foppish show, they were married.

They returned to open the now trebly valuable home and start life together determined to live lives that should be worth while and to seek happiness from its only source.

Several weeks of great happiness went by. Each morning Vir went to his labors after kissing the wife of his heart and waving his hand to her as he turned the corner where he took the car. Each night she was waiting at the window to see him come across the field. What a bright reward to his day's toil to see that shining face at the window when he turned the corner. Dear, faithful wife, working through the long hours of the day that everything might be

warm and homelike and the dinner might be the best possible when her husband came from his work at night.

Vir's business had paid him but poorly some months previous to this and in the prosperity which followed he had wisely put aside a little sum for use in a possible rainy day. They had not been married long before that rainy day unexpectedly came. Despite Vir's best efforts his income continued to decrease and then decrease more. They sat up nights talking about it and devising ways to make the business at least increase to the normal. With the energy of despair Vir worked but it seemed that no one wanted what he had to sell.

One day he came home feeling quite discouraged over the outlook. "Sweetheart, my best efforts seem to be of little avail. I have been working faithfully. You know that. But it has come to this. We must draw on our little nest egg and trust to hard work and a change of fortune." But the change of fortune didn't come and the nest egg dwindled and dwindled. Finally they came to that point where they cut their food supply and then cut it again. And that heroic woman never murmured, never complained, never said, "I told you so."

What different food she had eaten. Only in her days of long ago had she been brought to hunger, but now she took meat from the daily menu and then tea and toast formed the breakfast. Vir was covered with shame, but his shame seemed to get him deeper into the depths. Fate seemed to will thus at that time and it brought out another priceless quality in Dunora's character. Day after day, hour after hour the heroic girl listened to the ticking

of that brazen voiced clock in the kitchen counting off the hours in a nearly foodless house. And in all that time Vir Noble never heard a word of complaint from her. Vir suffered cruelly too, but he was out on the streets where the edge of it was taken off, not alone with a merciless ticking clock.

Each night he thought he could bring home the needed money, but day after day passed and it only came in driblets. Dunora could have run a charge account at a grocer's and could have obtained food to be paid for later but she was of too heroic a nature. She would not contract a bill till she saw ahead the means of paying it. Compare this with the City of Dreadful Debt, New York, where thousands dress in ermines, ride in expensive motor cars, dine at costly hotels and never own one dollar's worth of what they use and are never sued because to sue them would hurt the creditor's business. Compare this with those who mortgage their houses and leave the grocers' and butchers' bills unpaid that they may buy automobiles in which to carry their worthless persons. And then build a monument of respect to Dunora who asks none.

And the dear wife's faithfulness was rewarded, for at length the tide turned, good fortune came, the money came in and she had won. She had won more than she thought for solemnly, within himself, Vir Noble had taken oath that even outside of his marriage vow he would protect that woman from even a suggestion of an evil wind to the last ounce of strength and the last drop of blood in his body.

Even after their marriage Vir saw with increasing anxiety the continuance of Dunora's illness. Though he begged her to remain in bed in the morn-

ing and though he knew it would almost surely be her salvation to do so, he never could induce her to remain in bed much after daylight for her previously overwrought nerves would not permit her to lie at ease at all during daylight. In the evening when he returned from work the greatest present she could have given him would have been for her to have told him that she had rested during some part of the day. But never did that happy word come.

Instead he would find that she had swept every rug, washed every hardwood floor, cleaned the cellar, dusted the house from top to bottom, gotten out the silverware and polished it and in addition to that had prepared and cooked her own meals and a big dinner for him. Her nerves drove her onward.

And in addition to this she seldom retained food long after she had eaten it. It wrenches the very core of Vir to see her suffer so, but in this he could personally do little beyond removing every worry and making the path smooth. He hired a maid for her and then he was rejoiced to see that she let this maid do an increasing amount of the work. And he also observed how perfectly Dunora managed.

Sick as she was and especially when she was so nervously ill, Vir could readily see that he had not fully won her real love. Irene she loved with more than a mother's devotion, but the man could not wonder that under the conditions her bruised heart had not entirely healed. And he steadfastly endeavored to find ways to more and more heal those old wounds and thereby enable her to put out the love he knew was in her.

She was utterly unselfish and never did he catch

her in a thought in which she did not consider him first. If she bought a very small quantity of candy for herself when she was out she always brought home half to Vir. Even if she desired an orange while outdoors she always bought two that she might bring home one to Vir.

In addition to this, her dainty fingers, never quiet, would engage in embroidery and crochet work and, in the evenings, he would sit for a long time and watch her deft fingers manipulate the needle so as to produce mysterious beauties of lace. What a surpassingly beautiful contrast to the life he had lived. Is there any political office, any gift within the gift of men which brings joy like this? He would not have exchanged that home and scene for the compounded rewards of all the world.

Yet he had much to learn of women's ways and women's hearts. Virgil knew worldly women only when he wrote, "Femina semper mutabile est," for real woman is not changeable. She is the most steadfast of the sexes. Her staunchness is superior to man's. But in her moods she is changeable. Moods are superficial. Vir had yet much to learn about Dunora. He was guilty of one of the most blameworthy sins, that of thoughtlessness.

Day after day he returned home to find his faithful wife awaiting him. But at moments of relaxation he would observe her with that far away look in her eyes and on one or two occasions as she sat at the table with him she would faint and he only preserved her from falling by catching her as she lost control of herself. These far away looks and fainting spells she explained by merely saying, "I don't feel well."

One day he returned home and found the house empty. No sign of Dunora anywhere, yet on the kitchen table was a note characteristic of the girl.

“Dear—

Had to go to Lynn. Don’t worry. Sweetheart.”

What did it mean? He didn’t know. At first he was puzzled. But a great, gnawing uncertainty, a growing of fear began to prey upon him.

“Dear—

Had to go to Lynn. Don’t worry.

Sweetheart.”

He read it and read it and then read it. Its very uncertainty and indefiniteness laughed at him. It mocked him, derided him, struck him. What did she mean by doing that? He hadn’t the slightest idea. He read it again and tried to read between the lines, but its few words admitted of no subtle interpretation. There was no deriving any meaning from them than that conveyed on the surface. Just a few words, yet what did they impart. “Don’t worry.” Those two words had ineffable sweetness.

Vir knew that Dunora fully realized how he was even ill at ease if she were only in the next room, that he could hardly bear her out of his sight. She also knew how fully he trusted her and that any word from her was taken as truth itself by him. Therefore she knew when she wrote those words, “Don’t worry,” that he would endeavor not to worry with all the power of endeavor in him. Kindness in her dictated those two words. But what a deep, mysterious being she was.

Hour after hour dragged by and no Dunora. He

began to pace the floor, then rush from the kitchen through the dining room and parlor to the hall and back to the kitchen, journeying and rejourneying over that circle. Then he stood at some one of the windows as each half hourly car came and looked with longing eyes to see if she got off the car. But car after car came and hour after hour sped and she did not return. Then he resumed pacing his rounds with his breath beginning to come in gasps. "Surely she'll come soon! Surely she'll come soon!" he kept repeating to himself in excited exclamation. But she didn't. There then followed more pacing to and fro while he had wrung from him the words "Oh, God! Oh, God!" And darkness fell.

Oh, the horrors of that supperless, sleepless night! Every hour was a year, every half hourly car a cataclysm. Where was the wife of his heart? Where was his very soul, the earthly expression of all his best with her superiority superimposed thereon? Oh, why would not the All Seeing One speak and tell him? The eye of the Omnipotent beheld Dunora at that hour and why not Vir's eyes? But, thank God, there came to the distracted mind of the lover husband the words which Dunora had written—"Don't worry." And strange and terrible as the season was he stubbornly fought worry. The night ended and the day came and it brought no Dunora.

Then he got into telephonic communication with Mrs. Fuller and told her what had happened. She was much astonished but also told him not to worry. She told him she would go to all Dunora's friends whom she knew and try to find her. They agreed to meet that evening when she would report the result of her search.

They met in the evening and Mrs. Fuller had found no trace of Dunora. Nevertheless she repeated her advice to Vir not to worry, but worry he did. Day after day came and went, the first week passed while Vir suffered inhumanly. Gray hairs appeared on his head for the first time in his life. The second week began and ended. Vir was all but beside himself.

At the very end of the second week Vir went into his office a sadder and thinner man. The telephone rang and listlessly he picked up the receiver. He heard Mrs. Fuller's voice and her words took the very breath from his body. "Come out to Everett quickly to my house. Dunora is here and wants you. Don't be surprised if she doesn't look well, for she has been in a hospital."

Vir hung up the receiver with a slam and rushed for a means of conveyance in which to proceed to Everett in the quickest time possible. He reached the house, flung open the door, rushed within and there sat Dunora.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

### LOVE RULES

**T**HREE sat Dunora! The feeling which went over Vir was such as he had never experienced before in his entire life. A flood of questions came to his mind. A cloud of mist rolled its convolutions before his eyes but he brushed it aside. Dunora sat not in the parlor where they had met the first time in that house but she was in a chair in the dining room. And Vir's heart felt a great pressure of pain as he saw how pale his dear wife was.

He rushed to her side, fell upon his knees. "Dunora—Dunora, I don't ask where you have been, I trust you too much for that, but why did you leave me, girlie? It almost killed me, I have been crazed with fear for you. You are not well, tell me why you went."

Dunora looked at him, her blue eyes sparkling with the fire of suppressed feeling and pain. Her mouth opened and all the walls of restraint broke down. "Vir, how can I love you? You think you are almost perfect, that you have no faults. You are conceited, I hate it. You are not a gentleman, you have no manners, you don't know how to eat properly. You are the most selfish man I ever knew. When I do nice things for you, you only take them for granted as calmly as though I should

do them. Perhaps I should do them, but I would like sometimes to know you liked them. At times I despised you for all these acts. Being so very sensitive they hurt much. I couldn't endure those hurts any longer so ran away to a hospital where I could rest and think." And then the tears came. How tears sometimes carry away our sorrows with them.

For the first time since the girl began to speak she looked directly at her husband. He was looking into her face with a look of surprised horror upon his face. Her eyes strayed over him and they rested upon the top of his head. What did they see—gray hairs? Surely not, Vir's hair was almost black. But, yes, they were gray hairs. Then her eyes looked more closely at his face. Oh, the lines of pain there. A tender look came into those eyes now. Vir saw and fell to the floor with a half dry sob.

She knelt on the floor beside him, put her hand that he loved so well, upon those gray hairs, and the man knew he was forgiven all his faults. He also knew that now this woman truly loved him, loved him when he had looked so very black to her. Yes, that was surely love.

Vir arose and drew Dunora into his arms. "Dear, I never knew. No one ever told me before. Can you ever forgive?" He waited to hear her say "Yes." She did. "Dunora girlie, never will you find any more such terrible mistakes in my behavior again. My whole life shall be spent trying to make amends for those horrible weeks you lived through and trying to make you happy. I will not ask you to come home until I have overcome my faults. And then you will come, will you not, dear?"

"My husband, we are going home now this very moment. You overcame your largest fault when you admitted you had faults. Maybe they were not really so bad as I thought them. Anyway, I love you, I am sure of that now, so I want you anyway. Come!"

The man kissed her with a rapture with which he had never kissed her before. He saw a light as of heaven come upon that dear face that had seen so many trials. He knew love had won and it seemed as though great weights had fallen from him. Only the gray hairs remained the witness to what he had suffered without his beacon.

Ah, little cot in Boston's suburbs, what a new glamor now haloes you! Two people now enter your welcoming doors, two people who have fought a good fight and have won the great prize of love enduring! Two happy hearts now seek safe anchorage after they have been long tossed on the angry billows of the ocean of human existence. And over this nest these two seek the blessing of Him who has promised that bye and bye "every man shall sit under his own vine and fig tree and none shall molest."

And over that little cot the seasons roll their ripening harvests. The summer in all its passion of blood arrives and blesses hill and dale, field and forest. The joyous birds sing love from twig and bough, the gaily feathered swallows twitter and sail in heaven's blue canopy.

Then the Autumn arrives with its cheering, fire-side days, its riot of color on the trees, its nutty flavor on the breeze. The harvests find safe refuge in the barns and all nature gathers her children under the protection of her ample and motherly wings

and safely snuggles them in warm home and harbor against the approaching season.

And then Mother Earth is reclothed. Her dress of green in the summer has changed to the soberer brown of the Autumn. Yet her suit of brown soon changes to robes of spotless white. And as the purity of God's own love clothes in symbol field and forest, the New Year is born. The New Year? Yes. And also, while the echo of the bells of New Year's gladness was yet reverberating down the blue vault of heaven, there came to the two in the cot of love a greater gladness in the form of another Vir, a tiny, helpless gift from God, a little Vir.







UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



**A** 000 126 862 2

